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EXAMINING HYBRID SPACES FOR NEWCOMER ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF EMAIL EXCHANGES WITH BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

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EXAMINING HYBRID SPACES FOR NEWCOMER ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF EMAIL EXCHANGES WITH BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

by

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Dedication

to the students of Newcomer High School

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Examining Hybrid Spaces for Newcomer English Language Learners: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Email Exchanges with Business Professionals

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Abstract: This paper provides analysis of a series of email correspondences between secondary newcomer immigrant students and Latino business professionals within the same urban community. The author, using James Gee's discourse theory (1990, 1996, 1999, 2004) contends that school-based discourses and structures have historically operated as barriers to academic success and societal acceptance for the vast majority of secondary English Language Learners, indicating the systemic perpetuation of a racist, classist, xenophobic social order through the public schools. When an attempt is made to sidestep these school-based discourses and put students in direct contact with mature, successful practitioners of English outside of the education community, the students encounter "mentor talk," a set of discourses that uncritically embrace the notions of a neutral, meritocratic, knowledge-based socioeconomic order. At the same time, students

encounter language that can be appropriated for their own creative constructions of identity as they seek to position themselves in a new society. Even when there exists a strong alignment between the student's socially-situated identity presentation and the ideological thrust of "mentor talk," many societal barriers stand in the pathway of social and educational advancement. More often, the student identities express resistance, often subtle, to the standard, hegemonizing guidelines for success they have been offered.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents a critical discourse analysis (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995, 2003; Gee, 1990, 1999; Rogers, 2004; Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & Joseph, 2005; Wodak, 2004) of a series of email exchanges between Latino immigrant newcomer high school English Language Learners at a Texas inner-city public high school and their "business professional partners," Latino English-speaking adults living and working in the same city. Through the analysis, I examine the surface and underlying features of the language produced in these exchanges, which were deliberately created as a departure from norms of school-based discursive practices that have largely proven detrimental to late arrival ELL[1] students' chances for academic success. In enacting these email correspondences, I challenge a premise, rooted in American lore, that immigrants and their children (especially those who are non-white) must follow a well-trod pathway of subordinate roles, often over generations, before considering themselves worthy of white-collar status (Olneck, 2004; H. Trueba & Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). In an era of massive global migrations and rapid advances in global communications, late arrival immigrant students, given their multilingual, multicultural identities, may be ideally poised to foster innovation in American economies and societies (C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001). From a curricular standpoint, I chronicle an enactment of James Paul Gee's idea of discursive

[1] Throughout this document I use the term "English Language Learner" (ELL) to describe students in the process of acquiring English as a non-native academic language. The term "Limited English Proficient" (LEP) remains the official state and federal category for English Language Learners; because of its deficit orientation (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997), I use the term only when referencing state or federal data or policies that have retained it.

"apprenticeships" for the second language learner, albeit in a greatly reduced form (Gee, 1990). By using the Internet, already a vital communication tool for many immigrant students, the project simultaneously acknowledges and attempts to work around the students' isolation in a hypersegregated pocket of an urban center (Orfield, Frankenburg, & Lee, 2003). Furthermore, email as a communicative medium demonstrates tendencies of both oral and written language, resulting in a hybrid discourse that exhibits greater linguistic variation (and permissibility) than handwritten correspondence (Grosvenor, 1998; Sotillo, 2000; Thurlow, Lengel, & Tomic, 2004; Toyoda & Harrison, 2002). Combining this with the more relaxed standards for grammar and correctness that business professionals often demonstrate compared to the expectations of professional educators (Gray & Heuser, 2003; Hairston, 1981), email as a communicative medium aligns well with the students' status as emerging English speakers, readers, and writers.

The study took place during the 2006-2007 school year in an all-immigrant newcomer high school in a metropolitan area of central Texas. A group of 14 Latino second-year students in this high school were matched with an equal number of English-speaking Latino business professionals for a biweekly exchange of correspondence over the course of the fall semester. In all, 5-8 email exchanges occurred over the 12-week period, depending upon the pair. A preliminary, cursory critical discourse analysis was conducted between each of the sessions in order to shape conversations about the interpretation and composition of language with the students (Fairclough, 1995) and as a means of developing grounded theories about the nature of these communications (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Upon conclusion of the data collection, I undertook a more in-

depth critical discourse analysis in order to examine the language produced, including surface-level features and the underlying structures and ideological orientations.

An essential premise of critical discourse analysis is that the analyst places the micropolitics of local language use within a larger political and historical context so as to adequately identify the ideologies in play, including those at work upon and espoused by the analyst himself/herself (Fairclough, 1995; Gebhard, 2004; Gee, 1990, 1999; Rogers *et al.*, 2005; Wodak, 2004). As Gebhard states, "Institutional practices, or 'organizational discourses' (e.g., approaches to curriculum and instruction)… in turn shape and are shaped by societal discourses and ideologies regarding the education of second language learners (e.g., assumptions regarding societal multilingualism and diversity)" (2004, p. 247). Before describing the research projects that have most directly informed this study (in Chapter Two) and the methodology I employ (in Chapter Three), I use the bulk of this chapter to describe the unique historical moment encompassed by such terms as "majority-minority," "globalization" and "global diaspora," and the impact this moment is having on Texas schools and the immigrant students within them. It is no understatement to say that the current wave of immigration is a daily, hotly contested topic in our state's and nation's political agendas and an on-the-surface element within our national consciousness. As such, the official state ideologies that have taken shape around these issues have had an ineluctable effect on my formulation of the basic research questions; more often than not (though not always), they have provoked resistance to what I perceive as the perpetuation of injustice and oppression. At the

conclusion of the chapter, I present my research questions as a type of response to the broader forces at play upon school-age immigrant students in Texas.

CURRENT IMMIGRATION TRENDS IN THE UNITED STATES

The United States, this "nation of immigrants," this "beacon of democracy," has never rested comfortably with these two appellations. From our country's very inception, waves of immigrants have entered this country and sought their places in the economic, social, and political order, only to find that the pathways to acceptance and appreciation are hard-fought and hotly contested. Acceptance and appreciation has been accorded to many – this country could not have survived for very long if it did not make allowances for the changing dynamics that go part and parcel with the "land of opportunity" moniker – but more often than not, these allowances have occurred slowly, not within the first generations' arrivals, but much later, after their children and their children's children have been brought up as assimilated Americans. The road to Americanization has become part of the lore of this country; school textbooks recognize the struggles through the publication of sepia-toned photos of Ellis Island and "No Irish Need Apply" signs, but go on to proclaim our advancement as a heterogeneous, proudly multicultural society.

The many "involuntary" migrants to this country, those who already occupied the land before white settlers landed, or those brought here in bondage, have not enjoyed similar acceptance (Blauner, 1987; Ogbu, 1991; E. T. Trueba & Bartolomé, 2000b; H. Trueba, 1989). The lowest socioeconomic tiers of American society have long been occupied disproportionately by African-Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican-Americans (Anzaldúa, 1999; Banks, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a; Ogbu, 1991;

Wilson, 1987). When mention is made of "two Americas" (Edwards, 2003) one where prosperity lies within reach, and the other, where poverty seems inescapable, race often forms the dividing line (Edwards, 2003; Ehrenreich, 2001; Gee, 2004a; Reich, 1992; Wilson, 1987). That is the case today, as it has been since the Founding Fathers narrowly construed "We the People" as white, land-holding men.

Change is in the air, however, threatening to undo the stasis of our color-based social order in ways that numerous waves of civil rights activism and legislation have not been able to accomplish. Our country's four largest states – California, New York, Texas, and Florida – are witnessing a rapid and watershed shift in demographics, from mostly-white residents to "majority-minority" status (Capps, Fix, Murray, Ost, Passel, & Herwantoro, 2005; Passel, 2005). While many Southwest states have long had majority-minority status, other states, particularly in the Southeast, are seeing minority student populations increase in excess of 200% over the last decade (Kochhar, Suro, & Tafoya, 2005; Morse, 2005). What accounts for this wave of change? An influx of "people of color" from Central and South America, Asia, and Africa is creating a new face for the United States of America.

Some statistics are helpful to obtain a better grasp of the monumentality of the shift in our social makeup. Since 1990, slightly over one million immigrants have legally entered this country every year (Capps *et al*., 2005; M. M. Suárez-Orosco, 2005); at least 10 million and up to 12 million undocumented immigrants currently reside within our borders (Passel, 2005). Currently, 36 million residents within the U.S. are immigrant-born, and 65 million are either themselves immigrants, or the sons and daughters of

immigrant parents (M. M. Suárez-Orosco, 2005). In the 1990s, the numbers of "foreign stock" (first- or second-generation) residents increased by 30%, with more than 50% of these residents of Latin American origin, and over 25% from Asia (M. M. Suárez-Orosco, 2001).

Comparing two statistics compiled by demographer Steve Murdock vividly demonstrates the rate of migration in the state of Texas. Assuming a net migration pattern of 0% (no movement in or out of the state) from 2000-2010, the Latino populace is expected to grow by 20.9%. Holding migration patterns constant to 2000-2002 rates, Murdock predicts a 48% growth in the Latino population over the same 2000-2010 time period. In other words, the growth rate of the Latino population will grow by half its total in ten years assuming that immigration patterns will continue their present trends (Murdock, 2005). ("Other," non-white ethnic groups, though much smaller in number than the Latino population, experienced an 80% growth rate over 1990-2000, an important predictor of future trends.) Murdock also projects ahead to 2040 to give a demographer's picture of the state: 65.5% of high-school age youth will be Latino and only 20.3% White, compared to the current 38.4% and 45%, respectively (2005). And as Marcelo Suárez-Orosco states, "What Texas will see in 2015 the rest of the country will see in 2040" (Suárez-Orosco, 2005). A powerful, irrevocable change is indeed in the air.

GLOBALIZATION DRIVING IMMIGRATION

In an era of tightened national security and heightened border surveillance (both governmental and private), it is essential to ask why this wave of immigration, the largest in our nation's history (Capps *et al.*, 2005), is occurring. Suárez-Orosco points to

globalization as the source of this movement. He defines globalization as the simultaneous functioning of three socio-economic mechanisms: "new information and communications technologies; the emergence of global markets and of post-national, knowledge-intensive economies; and unprecedented levels of immigration and displacement" (2001, p. 345; For other definitions and discussions of globalization, see (Apple, 1996, 2001; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996; Iyer, 2000; Lloyd, 2000; McLaren, 2000; Reich, 1992). Outcomes of globalization include stagnating or depressed wages for service industries and unskilled and semi-skilled labor in industrialized nations, with a corresponding rise in labor costs in underdeveloped countries (Gee *et al.*, 1996; Reich, 1992); a modernization of traditional economies, communities, and habitats, particularly in Third World countries (Apple, 1996; Gee *et al.*, 1996; Reich, 1992; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001); the rapid diversification of societies in industrialized nations (Iyer, 2000; M. M. Suárez-Orosco, 2001); and an exponential expansion of products and services available in a worldwide marketplace (Gee *et al.*, 1996; Iyer, 2000; McLaren, 2000; Reich, 1992).

Globalizing forces may bring immigrants to this country yet racism within our borders keeps them at bay. Combined, these forces lead to a new view of immigrants to this country – by virtue of their non-white status, they are "unmeltable" in American society (C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001, p. 8). While they are largely confined to housing highly segregated by race, class, and home language (Orfield *et al.*, 2003), they are at the same time more inclined to remain in contact with their communities of origin through new technologies such as improved telephone service, satellite television,

and the Internet. Moreover, with greater ease in mobility, they are more apt to view themselves as multinationals or transnationals and less likely to give over to the notion of becoming fully American (C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001).

Globalization may be bringing more residents to the U.S. (and to all industrialized nations) but reading between the lines of Suárez-Orosco's definition yields a grim prophecy: as new technologies provide manufacturers additional means to reduce labor forces, and with ever-increasing global competition for unskilled labor, industrial nations can expect progressively fewer unskilled and semi-skilled labor opportunities for the lowest strata of society (Apple, 1996; Gee *et al.*, 1996; Reich, 1992; Wilson, 1987). Wealthy manufacturers and service-providers have already begun to take advantage of globalizing technologies to move production to places on the planet where the wages are low yet quality and efficiency remain high (Apple, 1996; McLaren, 2000). The notion of "floorshop mobility" has taken on a new meaning as the floorshops themselves are moved overseas (M. M. Suárez-Orosco, 2005).

In other words, for most recent immigrants to the United States, few of the promises of a "melting pot" ideology and of a meritocratic society hold true even in a rhetorical sense – the conditions are simply not present for such promises to come to fruition. Thus far, our society has embraced new arrivals largely within its underclass—in increasingly segregated housing (Orfield *et al.*, 2003) and the lowest-paying jobs, either those that are legal but on the poverty threshold (Ehrenreich, 2001) or those in the not-so-underground economy of day labor and undocumented worker employment (Passel, 2005). The trends created within this formulation of new arrivals in American

society point to an increasingly segregated and splintered socio-economic order (E. T. Trueba & Bartolomé, 2000a). And we have not yet begun to talk about the children.

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES

Immigrant children represent the fastest-growing sector of the American population (C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001). One out of six babies currently born in the United States has a Latina mother (M. M. Suárez-Orosco, 2005). California saw a 44% increase in the number of English Language Learning students at the secondary level in just three years (1996-1999) (Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999). Texas expects to see a tripling of the number of English Language Learning students in public elementary and secondary schools over the period 2000-2040 (Murdock, 2005). Public schools serve as the primary means (in many cases, the only means) of incorporating these young people into a democratic, pluralistic society, and to provide them the skills essential for healthy participation in the American economic order (Glickman, 1993; Kao & Tienda, 1995; E. T. Trueba & Bartolomé, 2000b; H. Trueba, 1989). Given the expected decline in unskilled and semi-skilled labor opportunities in the American economy, successfully educating these newest Americans seems all the more important to our social well-being.

RESPONSES FROM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

And yet, consistent with both America's history of not accepting immigrants gracefully and its insistence on a racialized society, the American educational system has veered away from, not toward, facing the challenges that the new immigrants bring. Over the past 20 years, the educational system has been introducing phases of what

Michael Apple terms a "conservative modernization" movement that has had devastating effects on the most vulnerable students, including those who are poor, non-white, and who speak a language other than English (Apple, 2001). Current macro trends in U.S. public education include: the adoption of uniform standards of curriculum which largely affirm the white-dominated bastions of power and neglect other sectors of society (Apple, 1990, 2001; Delpit, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1995); standardized tests with high stakes for both students and educators (Apple, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2004; McNeil, 2000, 2004; McNeil & Valenzuela, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999, 2002, 2004b; Wood, 2004); a subsequent narrowing of the curriculum for those most "at-risk" of failing high-stakes tests to repetitive test preparation and test-based knowledge (McNeil, 2000; Valenzuela, 2004b); the suppression of languages other than English within schools (Soto, 1997; Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999) and a post-desegregation return to neighborhood-based schools, hypersegregated institutions which all but guarantee poorer educational offerings and outcomes for Black and Latino students (Fry, 2005a, 2005b; Orfield *et al.*, 2003; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001).

The lure of the labor market also contributes significantly to the relative lack of success for foreign-born teens in U.S. public schools. Though just 8% of the U.S. school population, foreign-born teens account for 25% of the dropout rate, and if they experienced interruptions to or difficulties in their school in their native countries, their dropout rate soars to 70% (Fry, 2005a, 2005b). Analysis by the Pew Hispanic Center suggests that for most of the male foreign-born students who had experienced difficulties in education in their native countries, work, not schooling, was their primary rationale for

coming to the U.S. Pew researcher Richard Fry writes, “Given their participation in the labor market and the degree to which they were behind in school, the prospects of enrolling these [predominantly male] youths in traditional high school settings appear to be remote” (Fry, 2005a). Although these students earn significantly higher wages than their age-group, U.S.-born peers, their literacy and numeracy skills are far below the average. Despite their minority age, they remain a key target for exploitation in the undocumented labor market.

TEXAS SCHOOLS AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS IN THE ACCOUNTABILITY ERA

The education system of Texas provides an illustrative example of the unfolding of the conservative modernization movement. The test-based, high-stakes accountability system originally put into operation in the mid-1980s has gradually encompassed more elements of public school life and served as a precursor for federal No Child Left Behind Legislation, which in turn has brought additional demands for testing and evaluation criteria ("No Child Left Behind Act of 2001", 2001; Valenzuela, 2004b). Though the chief ostensible goal of the accountability system is to reduce achievement gaps between “at-risk” students (linguistic and ethnic minorities, and those qualifying as low income), multi-year findings demonstrate that the achievement gap between Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and native-English speaking students has not significantly closed, and dropout rates for LEP students have appeared to rise (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Haney, 2000). Proponents of the Texas education system and NCLB, including critical race scholars, argue that the system is a better guarantee of academic literacy for all students than anything that has preceded it (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). What often

goes unrecognized in such declarations, however, is that policies were not designed with second-language learners in mind and because of this, the pressures on them are significantly higher than for native language speakers.

A few examples of data and policy illustrate the unfair playing field that immigrant students face upon entry into the Texas school system. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), backed by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (2001), mandates that immigrant students who arrive at the secondary level (grades 7-12) may be given an initial three-year "immigrant exemption" from high-stakes tests if they demonstrate below grade-level performance in academic work in their native languages (TEA, 2001). After the three-year exemption expires, or if a student enters the 11th grade, students regardless of prior schooling are required to attempt the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in English with all high stakes attached. This policy has been in practice since the inception of the TAKS exam in 2002, ostensibly to prevent students from languishing in English as a Second Language instruction without ever advancing to classes offered in "regular" English. However, this policy defies abundant research that demonstrates that true academic proficiency in a second language typically takes between four and seven years of study (Cummins, 2003; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Ovando, Combs, & Collier, 2006). Hence, ELL students are pushed into the high stakes exams well before they are ready for grade-level work in English.

Student scores on the TAKS count in the schools' published ratings and the outcomes have real consequences for the students; failure on one or more of the exams can mean loss of elective choices and substitution of remedial classes, summer school, or

quite frequently, retention. ELL students at the high school level often bump up against the graduation requirement of passing the 11th grade exam required for graduation. They take the test repeatedly, failing each time, and eventually reach an age where they are no longer allowed to remain in a public high school (21 years old). More typically, because of the cumulative effects of test failure and grade-level retention, they drop out well before they are beyond the maximum age of schooling (Fry, 2005a; Haney, 2000; Wood, 2004).

More and more scholars are documenting the kinds of "rote-oriented, punishment-driven" test-driven curricula that all public school students, especially those residing in communities with high concentrations of poverty and ethnic minority groups, receive as an outcome of a high-stakes accountability framework (Darling-Hammond, 2004, p. 5; (McNeil, 2000, 2004; McNeil & Valenzuela, 2001; Meier, 2002; Valenzuela, 2004b; Valenzuela & Black, 2004a; Wood, 2004). The pressure on ELLs to achieve the requisite test results can be considered much greater than average given the short time window given to attain academic fluency, the deficit viewpoint toward second language learning, and the relatively paltry school-based support mechanisms they are provided (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Soto, 1997; E. T. Trueba & Bartolomé, 2000a; H. Trueba & Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997).

In this era of globalization, biliteracy or literacy in multiple languages ought to be considered an asset for our nation's youth. Here again, the nation persists in viewing languages other than English as deficits (E. T. Trueba & Bartolomé, 2000a; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). The continued use of the term Limited English

Proficient (LEP) as the official designation for English Language Learners is a hallmark of this deficit perspective (Black & Valenzuela, 2004). With the adoption of NCLB in 2001, the federal Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) was renamed the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (OELA) (NCLB, 2001). In 2005, the New York Times exposed the suppression of a multi-year, federally-commissioned report which validates the use of native languages in order to bolster academic instruction in English (Editorial, New York Times, September 4, 2005). Such stances toward biliteracy have led Suárez-Orosco to conclude that "America is a cemetery for languages" (2005).

A TEXAS POLICY THAT HARMS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS – THE READING PROFICIENCY TEST IN ENGLISH

Even a seemingly benign, non-high stakes standardized reading test for ELLs appears more suspicious under scrutiny. Angela Valenzuela and Bill Black trace the development of the Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE) as a logical outgrowth of a test-based accountability structure, where equity is couched in terms of "equal access to mandated testing" (Black & Valenzuela, 2004).

Even though the RPTE does not fit within the official state accountability formulae for determining individual and school state ratings, it fits squarely within the discourse of high-stakes accountability. The RPTE was initially intended to serve as a guide to measure the progress English Language Learners make toward their eventual assessments by the English TAKS - as such, it is based upon the structure of the English

TAKS Reading exam (Black & Valenzuela, 2004). Valenzuela and Black trace the implementation of the RPTE back to an independent consulting agent's report to the Texas Legislature in 2000. This report sought ways to incorporate more ELLs into the state's assessment system, though, in a telling move, it also rejected the notion of expanding the Spanish TAKS examinations into the 7th and 8th grades. A combination of factors, including cost-effectiveness, the lack of availability of Spanish-language instruction, and the desire for intense ESL instruction, were cited as reasons for not extending the bilingual education program into the middle school years (Black & Valenzuela, 2004).

Valenzuela and Black critique the RPTE as an artifact of "assimilationist policy archaeology," citing many instances where its development and uses perpetuate the systematic, subtractive processes of downgrading or stripping ELLs of their native languages and cultures. To support their analysis, they include the following elements:

- The test itself is a focus on a deficit, on a fluency that ELLs have not attained.
- Though it is not included in the official school rating system, its similarity to the TAKS invites the same fever of reporting and comparison, and makes it susceptible to similar kinds of policy-making.
- The test is intended to measure readiness for students to take (not necessarily pass) the TAKS test in English, a far more limited and limiting goal than a more thorough assessment of a student's readiness to participate in the full complement of academic instruction in English.

- By emphasizing English language development, it aligns nicely with the shortage of bilingual teachers, instructional materials in Spanish and other languages, and administrators with a positive view toward bilingualism/biculturalism. In doing so, it stifles conversations on the more additive views of late transition bilingual programs or dual language programs.
- Instructions to school LPAC committees for the use of the RPTE advocate a transition to English instruction (and the TAKS) though the student is still "struggling." Waiting longer, these instructions state, "distorts information about how well schools are meeting their educational needs" (TEA, 2005d).

The actual data reported by the Texas Education Agency on the RPTE do not bear out its promise as a tool for measuring the linear advancement of students. In 2001, 51% of the students who were receiving ESL or bilingual instruction for four years or more did not reach an Advanced level. Multi-year statewide data also suggest that in accordance with language acquisition research, students may remain at levels of proficiencies over more than one year. There is evidence that the pressures of the accountability system are pushing secondary school students into taking (and failing) the TAKS far sooner than they are ready. Significant numbers of students designated "Beginning" by the RPTE are required to the TAKS in English; not surprisingly, only 12% of these "Beginning" students end up passing the test (Black & Valenzuela, 2004).

The intent for the RPTE to serve merely as a guide to preparation for the TAKS was further modified by the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation in 2002. With this law in place, Texas schools now need to demonstrate "Adequate Yearly

Progress" for fixed percentages of all its students, ELLs included, across a matrix of assessments that includes the RPTE. This new wrinkle in the system further puts further pressure on students to demonstrate progress on a rigid, narrow assessment, one which does not match up to language development processes and which unscientifically declares an ELL student ready for undifferentiated instruction and high-stakes exams.

HOW SECONDARY ELL STUDENTS FARE IN TEXAS HIGH-STAKES EXAMS

As a means of demonstrating the negative outcomes of the aforementioned policies, this section presents the 2005 results for secondary-level TAKS exams and the 2004 exam results for the RPTE. According to state policy, an Advanced result on the RPTE purportedly signifies readiness for "regular" instruction and entry into the TAKS testing program. Table 1 shows the results of the 2005 administration of the TAKS for Texas students in grades 9-11, with results given for several categories relevant to this study. In 2005, 13% of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in Grade 9 met the passing requirements on the Reading and Mathematics tests, compared to 56% of all students in the state (TEA, 2005a). Looking back to the prior year (2004), 49% of the then-8th graders had earned an "Advanced" score on the RPTE, officially deeming them strong candidates for "regular" English instruction and the high-stakes TAKS exam (Fig. 2). Looking solely at the TAKS Reading exam, the test that the RPTE most closely resembles, in 2005, 83% of all students passed (TEA, 2005a). Nevertheless, only 30% of the LEP cohort was able to pass even though the previous year, nearly 50% of that cohort had been declared "Advanced" in their English language abilities (TEA, 2004).

The 11th grade TAKS exams serve as the gateway to graduation; passing all exams is required for a high school diploma. In 2005, 19% of LEP students passed all the exams, compared to a 69% passing rate for the entire 11th grade (TEA, 2005a). In the previous year 52% of that LEP cohort had earned an "Advanced" on the RPTE (TEA, 2004). Assuming they stayed in school, the 11th graders who did not pass were provided at least four more opportunities to take the exit-level TAKS exams before the end of 12th grade. Nevertheless, the practice of creating high expectations by declaring students "Advanced" then subjecting them to almost certain failure on the exit-level TAKS illuminates the skewed policy perspective toward secondary ELLs.

Figure 1: Percentage of student meeting minimum expectations on TAKS exams, Spring 2005 (TEA, 2005a)

		All students	African American	Hispanic	White	Native American	Asian	Econ. Disadv.	**LEP**
Grade 9	English Language Arts	**83**	75	75	93	88	91	74	**30**
	Mathematics	**58**	40	45	74	62	84	43	**18**
	All tests	**56**	38	43	73	60	80	41	**13**
Grade 10	English Language Arts	**68**	59	59	77	72	81	57	**20**
	Mathematics	**59**	39	46	75	67	84	44	**13**
	Science	**55**	35	39	72	63	78	37	**11**
	Social Studies	**85**	76	77	93	90	94	76	**43**
	All tests	**40**	22	27	56	46	66	24	**6**
Grade 11	English Language Arts	**88**	84	82	94	89	93	81	**39**
	Mathematics	**81**	68	73	90	84	94	71	**49**
	Science	**81**	69	71	91	88	91	69	**42**
	Social Studies	**95**	93	90	98	97	97	90	**65**
	All tests	**69**	53	57	82	73	85	54	**19**

Figure 2: Percentage of LEP students who scored in each category of RPTE, 2004 (TEA, 2004)

	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Grade 8	25	26	49
Grade 9	35	27	38
Grade 10	20	28	52

GRADUATION RATES OF TEXAS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

When it comes to perhaps the most important criterion for the evaluation of public school student success, graduation from high school, a large and hotly contested discrepancy exists between reporting by the Texas Education Agency on graduation rates and dropout statistics, and rates that have been compiled by independent analysts of national and Texas data (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Fry, 2005a, 2005b; Greene & Winters, 2004; Haney, 2000; McNeil & Valenzuela, 2001; Valenzuela, 2002, 2004b). For 2003-2004 (the most recent data available), the TEA reports an official dropout rate for all students grades 9-12 of 1.2%, and for Hispanic students a dropout rate of 1.9% (TEA, 2005b). (The TEA does not report data specifically for immigrant students, nor does it account for school-aged immigrant youth who never enrolled in a public school.) Though Ann Morse of the National Conference of State Legislatures admits to the difficulty of gathering data on immigrant school-aged youth, especially those who are undocumented and not enrolled in a public school, she contends that the dropout rate for immigrant youth is approximately twice that of their American-born peers, and accounts for more than half of the 15% Hispanic dropout rate in the U.S. (2005). Richard Fry of the Pew Hispanic Center, while contending that the dropout rate for foreign-born teenagers is exaggerated because many of them are in the U.S. with a primary motivation

of working, not studying, raises concerns not only about the dropout rates of those immigrant students who do enroll in schools, but also about the high concentrations of Hispanic students, including immigrants, currently attending large, underfunded, underperforming public high schools (Fry, 2005a, 2005b).

THE REACTION TO NCLB FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

The preponderance of evidence that the accountability system promoted through No Child Left Behind damages English Language Learning students' chances for success prompted James Crawford, the former Executive Director of the National Association for Bilingual Education, to publicize an about-face on his organization's initial support for the passage of NCLB (Crawford, 2004). He characterizes the law as it applies to ELLs as "overly rigid, punitive, unscientific, and likely to do more harm than good for the students who are now being left behind" (p. 1). In addition to the often-raised complaints that high-stakes testing narrows the curriculum, increases time given to test preparation, places undue pressures on teachers, and discourages innovation for all students, he cites more specific reasons for the law's failure as it applies to ELLs. He states that there is currently no reliable process for distinguishing between errors made on a standardized assessment due to language and errors due to faulty knowledge of subject matter; thus there can be no notion of test reliability for ELL test-takers (p. 2). He also calls into question the fairness of the NCLB-mandated creation of an LEP subgroup, a group, as he puts it, "defined… by low achievement level" (p. 3). Students who have gained enough proficiency in English are exited from the group and their scores no longer count within

the subgroup; hence, 100% achievement within this subgroup, the 2014 target set by NCLB, is a statistical impossibility (Morse, 2005). According to Crawford, the arbitrary nature of this long-term performance expectation and all benchmarks leading to the 100% passing rate fly in the face of logic and fail to account for the increasing mobility of U.S. society, especially within the ranks of low-income immigrant families.

SUMMARY

Thus far, this paper has attempted to frame the larger social and political context in which recent immigrant high-school age students operate within public school settings in the United States and in particular, within the state of Texas. In this context, these newcomer students face numerous institutional obstacles and societal impediments to their acceptance as valued scholars and leaders in a rapidly changing social order. In an age when widespread disaffection of American youth for school is proclaimed an educational crisis (Vander Ark, 2003), the rejection of immigrant students, who compared to their American-born peers hold a more pro-school, pro-work ethos (Kao & Tienda, 1995) and better mental and physical health characteristics (Portes & Rumbaut, 1997), seems all the more counter-productive, and points to the irrational workings of racism and xenophobia.

The lack of acceptance of newcomer students is accompanied by a potentially tremendous peril; as public schools continue to receive, and fail, immigrant students in ever-larger quantities, their communities risk increasing polarization along racial, cultural, and economic lines, and the public schools themselves may be branded as failures by the terms of the current accountability structures. Looking further ahead, as

society continues to relegate this increasing sector of its populace to the ranks of the lowest-earning and least-educated, the social fabric that has previously permitted (at the least) a generational advance of immigrant families may no longer operate with the same tolerance, resulting in a fracture of our heterogeneous, democratic society, and the economic prosperity that results from the free exchange of ideas and invention.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

From the "macro" view presented above, I now wish to bring the scale down to a much more local level. As a public school educator in a mid-sized city in Texas over the past nine years, I have witnessed the rapid shifts in schools' demographies and like numerous scholars (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Crawford, 2004; Fry, 2005a, 2005b; Gebhard, 2004; Gutiérrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002; Martinez-Roldan & Malave, 2004; McNeil, 2000, 2004; McNeil & Valenzuela, 2001; Meier, 2002; Valdés, 2001; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999, 2002, 2004b; Valenzuela & Black, 2004a), I have seen how state and national-level policy decisions have adversely affected the daily lives of our newest students and those who teach them, compounding what were already significant obstacles to acceptance as equals in American society.

In rethinking approaches to newcomer immigrant students, I begin by questioning the isolation that ELLs encounter in public schools, not only from their English-speaking peers, but also as a result of the hypersegregation that places their homes and schools far from the bastions of higher education and white-collar commerce in my city and many others (Fry, 2005b; Orfield *et al.*, 2003; Valdés, 2001).

As will be examined in-depth in Chapter Two, further isolation occurs within the classrooms themselves, as the students are fed a steady stream of instruction, consistent with the conservative modernization movement, that emphasizes correctness and standardized responses over the goal of communicative competence and flexibility (Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Pennington, 2002). Over 20 years ago, Maxine Hairston demonstrated in a simple survey of high-status community members that professionals outside of educational institutions hold views of common grammatical usages that is quite different from, and usually more tolerant than, the perceptions of professional teachers of English (Hairston, 1981). This study was recently updated by Loretta Gray and Paula Heuser; their findings demonstrated even more relaxed attitudes by those outside the education profession (Gray & Heuser, 2003). A greater tolerance for linguistic variation outside of the education community may indicate, as Victoria Cliett suggests, the gradual acceptance of varieties of "World Englishes," as opposed to the codified rules of British and American Standard English (Ball & Muhammad, 2003; Cliett, 2003). Whatever the source of this increased tolerance, the results of these studies can be juxtaposed as a counter to the rigidity of correctness found in most standardized assessments and in the classroom discourses of language instruction.

The desire to erode societal and institutional barriers, and the documented tolerance of non-educators for linguistic variation, prompted me to connect secondary ELLs in their second year of study in the U.S. via email to local Latino business professionals (as opposed to education professionals, medical professionals, political professionals, etc.). The students and the business professionals were paired for a series

of exchanges over a three-month period with the intent that the students receive and respond to the discourses of a fluent English-practicing populace far earlier than what schools typically allow. In describing the potential for discursive apprenticeships, James Gee, Colin Lankshear, and Glynda Hull propose that "If learning is to be efficacious, then what a child or an adult does now as a learner must be connected in meaningful and motivated ways with 'mature' (insider) versions of related social practices" (1996, p. 4; See also Gee, 2004a). Establishing these email dialogues is one such attempt to counteract the isolation newcomer students experience in a Texas public school and establish one-to-one connections with mature and successful practitioners of valued local discourses, many of whom traversed their own roads to proficiency in English and acceptance in a new culture.

Though the impetus for this project has an emancipatory tone, the multifaceted and pervasive resistance that American society demonstrates toward the notion of newcomer students achieving all but token success demands a critical lens in the viewing of the language produced in the email messages. Critical linguists contend that at the heart of notions of (un)acceptance and (in)tolerance lie ideologies, personally- and societally-held views about the relative value of the speakers of English (Fairclough, 1995; Gebhard, 2004; Gee, 1990). This perspective gives a rationale for how some accents are worth more than others and how some individuals can be allowed linguistic variations that others cannot. It also reinforces the contention of Black and Valenzuela that the types of assessments (and the ensuing test-based instruction) given to ELLs in Texas perpetuate longstanding race-based hierarchies of power in Texas society (Black &

Valenzuela, 2004). On the other hand, as Gee notes, because discourses as fluid, ever-changing entities always contain opportunities for opposition and innovation, individuals who are effective interpersonal communicators are often able to overcome ideological obstacles through their own faculties of charisma, clarity of purpose, and drive to succeed (Gee, 1990, 1992).

The analytic tool of critical discourse analysis will serve as the method for uncovering the power dynamics inherent in the language produced in these email messages. The selection of critical discourse analysis signifies my conviction that only with a rigorous and critical focus on the microlinguistic details of classroom discourses can we begin to uncover the networks of resistance that immigrant students face and take informed steps toward improving their schooling lives.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What socially-situated identities and underlying ideologies are presented by the adults to the students in the course of the email exchanges?
- How do students receive and respond to these identities and ideological orientations?
- How does student language change over the course of the email exchanges?

Chapter Two

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I presented an aggregate view of the policies, practices, and outcomes that newcomer high school-age students experience in Texas public schools. As the state of Texas continues to see a massive influx of immigrant families, and as peoples, markets, and jobs shift locations across the globe with increasing rapidity, a change in our approach to these newcomer students is essential in order to preserve long-term economic and social stability. Creative, intelligent solutions will be needed to retain jobs and create new markets. I will argue later in this chapter that immigrant students as possessors and interpreters of multiple cultural stances are uniquely poised to assist the state of Texas in retaining economic security and social stability. However, as the statistics of the last chapter abundantly displayed, a positive orientation toward the potential of immigrant students rarely gets played out in our public schools.

This chapter ties together three research traditions that further round out the macropolitical view of newcomer students in U.S. public school and contribute to the design of this study. I narrow my focus within newcomer ELL studies to ethnographic accounts of immigrant students in public secondary schools. Within these studies, there are descriptions of classroom situations, community lives, and human interactions that are uncannily similar to what I have experienced as an educator working with immigrant newcomer students. Of particular import is the theoretical framework of each study. I

would be remiss if I did not address each study's framework, for each has shaped my thinking as I approach my own research project. I explore in some detail each author's theoretical framework and the conclusions drawn based upon the theoretical filter in place.

The second research strand, more theoretical than empirical, is concerned with issues of correctness in student-produced-English, and in particular, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. In this era of standardized curriculum and test-based accountability, considerable attention has been devoted to improving the correctness of ESL student writing (Scarcella, 2003). However, numerous scholars question the viability of correctness as a criterion for language production given that the idea of "correctness" is laced with issues of power (Delpit, 1995; Gee, 1990), race-based judgments (Gee, 1990; Smitherman, 2000; Soto, 1997), and teacher subjectivism often leaning toward conservative, static views of the English language (Gray & Heuser, 2003; Hairston, 1981; Williams, 1981).

I also review research studies both explicating and utilizing critical discourse analysis techniques, the chief analytical tool for this investigation. Though I have not found a critical discourse analysis study specifically examining the language of instruction and interaction for newcomer high school students, other studies do examine the language surrounding marginalized populaces within schools, including speakers of non-standard English (Gee, 1990, 1999), elementary bilingual students (Gebhard, 2004, 2005; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 2000), and minority special education students (Rogers, 2002). Furthermore, a recent review of Critical Discourse analysis

studies pertaining to educational settings highlights trends in this fairly new and rapidly emerging field (Rogers *et al.*, 2005).

Bringing these three strands together, I propose the viability for a research project that intends to interrupt the traditional classroom practices for high school ESL instruction that have typically excluded newcomer ELLs from pathways to the economic and educational mainstreams of American society. The chief tool for this interruption will be the Internet, specifically, a set of email exchanges between Latino newcomer students on a highly segregated campus and Latino business professionals. While the intent of the project is emancipatory, critical discourse analysis of the written products provides an essential check on liberal enthusiasm, yielding what I hope will be a clear-eyed assessment of the messages that students receive from and produce for those who occupy positions of power and prestige in local society.

ETHNOGRAPHIES OF NEWCOMER IMMIGRANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Olsen – *Made in America* (1997)

Laurie Olsen's *Made in America* (1997) focuses on secondary newcomer students enrolled in ESL classes in a large, comprehensive Northern California public high school. Olsen highlights the process of Americanization that these students undergo as a result of enrollment in the public school system; for her, Americanization is a purely pejorative process which locks students into race- and class-based categories while depriving them of their home language and culture, meaningful English language instruction, and legitimate chances for entry into the college-bound track of students. Olsen subscribes to a cultural and social reproduction explanation for this phenomenon of

Americanization, and though she looks for elements of resistance within both the teacher and student ranks, the overwhelming impression she conveys is of collusion between educators' ideologies and systemic stasis to keep immigrant students in the lowest tiers of society.

Olsen provides poignant examples of how the concept of race is constructed in this country and the limited and subordinating racial paradigm of white, black, brown, and Asian that immigrant students are forced to conform to. She notes how immigrant students from countries across the globe adopt the term "taking off your turban" to describe the moment when a young person succumbs to the pressure to fit within the limited racial categories available in this country and begins to eliminate the visible and invisible hallmarks of his/her native culture (p. 39). Students who arrive in this country with fierce aspirations for academic and cultural success quickly find, however, that losing one's home language and culture is by and large a losing proposition; very few make significant inroads into either the social or academic milieus that signify advancement, and those that do continue to find outward resistance and an inward sense of bereavement (Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2002; Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2000; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rodriguez, 1983; Soto, 1997; Valdés, 1996).

This chronicle of high school life for immigrant students highlights the double-edged sword of "sheltered" English programs. On the one hand, immigrant students can truly find shelter from the complexity and cruelty of life in the comprehensive high school. They can seek support from their fellow immigrant students and from understanding teachers. On the other hand, participation solely in ESL classes not only

isolates the students from the fluid social language of their native-born peers, it also precludes opportunities for participation in the richer curriculum of the college track. By depriving the students of rigorous content-area study in their native languages while they are purposefully distancing themselves from their native tongues in order to "fit in," sheltered programs do not help students make up ground in their cognitive and linguistic skills. Furthermore, ESL students cannot take part in the pragmatic conversations that assist students along pathways to higher education; college remains an oft-stated goal but with little indication that students know how to enter the college-bound stream (See also Bettie, 2003). And when the sheltered programs are insufficiently staffed and resourced, as Olsen describes, the results are even more disastrous. ESL students often become "ESL lifers" or dropouts in this arrangement (p. 241; See also (Valdés, 2001).

Immigrant students are not the only losers in this race-based hierarchy. Olsen produces data of the disproportionately high percentages of African-American and Latino students in the lowest-tier "skills" classes, both at Madison and across the state of California, and of their dropout rates, which are significantly higher than white students or those of Asian descent. With such blatant divisions in academic opportunity afforded to Madison High students, the lines between ability and race become blurred, leading to views of cultural affinity (White and Asian) or deficiency (African-American and Latino) when it comes to academic potential.

What allows these inequities to continue? Olsen suggests that the overwhelmingly white teaching staff and the white student body may be caught in the midst of their own race-based identity crisis. The rapid influx of people of color and

immigrants to Bayview, combined with a severe economic recession in the town and across the state, compel many whites to view themselves in an "us versus them" position. In a tensely competitive economic climate, educators adopt a stance of colorblindness and a rhetoric of meritocracy in order to justify the differing success rates, and many educators and students resent the "extras" that immigrant students receive, such as a separate newcomer school, smaller class sizes in the sheltered content-area classes, and even civil rights legislation. In the cash-strapped state of California, teachers in particular feel the brunt of a societal depreciation of public education. Job insecurity, salary cutbacks, large classes, lack of time for planning and reflection, insufficient resources, and an unclean, unsafe campus make many resistant to the notion of extra preparation and attention for ESL learners. Still, Olsen takes exception with the notion of colorblindness as a "moral position;" to her, it "serves deeply vested interests and obscures an entire realm of student experience and the actual exclusion… as well as the school's class and racial sorting project" (p. 189; See also (Delpit, 1995; McIntosh, 1988; Scheurich, 1997; Smitherman, 2000). She refers to the teachers' refusals to investigate second language literacy acquisition as "pervasive ignorance" (Olsen, 1997).

Olsen had originally intended to document elements of resistance to the social and cultural reproductive forces at play in the school setting. Among the adults, she focuses on the alliance of four teachers of sheltered content areas. These educators try to bring a critical consciousness to their classroom work and attempt to open their colleagues' eyes to the discriminatory effects of the status quo; their work serves to bring them closer to their students but they are met with hostility from colleagues and supervisors. By the

close of the second year, however, two of the four have announced plans to leave the campus and by and large, all have retreated to positions of advocating for individual students, not systemic change.

Olsen concludes the book with a brief call for the "remaking" of the schools in order to eliminate the "institutional sorting and tracking of students into different futures" (p. 252). She offers a strong moral argument for this remaking but little in the way of how to begin the requisite conversations.

Valenzuela – *Subtractive Schooling* (1999)

Angela Valenzuela's ethnography *Subtractive Schooling* (1999) depicts a very different kind of Americanization, one that occurs within the hypersegregated (Orfield *et al.*, 2003; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001) East End of Houston. At Seguín High School, where Valenzuela spent three years conducting her ethnographic research (1994-1997), 95% of the 2000+ students are Latino, the vast majority of Mexican descent, and 45% of the students are first-generation Americans (predominantly from Mexico). Poverty is also concentrated in this predominantly working-class barrio located in the industrial shadows of Houston's Ship Channel. The intense concentration of Mexican-heritage students, both first-generation and U.S.-born, leads Valenzuela to compare and contrast these groups' schooling experiences, adding to the considerable volume of immigrant/non-immigrant student achievement comparisons (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Ogbu, 1991; Olsen, 1997; Portes & Rumbaut, 1997; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001). What makes Valenzuela's study particularly intriguing is her determination that it is the schooling process itself that has "created and amplified"

Latino lower- and working-class students' oppositionality to the American mainstream values promoted in schooling institutions, decreased their motivation to succeed, and fomented the divisions between immigrant and U.S.-born youth (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 17).

Valenzuela develops a tripartite theoretical framework in order to explain her conclusions. She draws upon the research and theories of Nel Noddings to distinguish between the aesthetic caring practices typically on display in American public schools and authentic caring practices, which Noddings and others suggest are largely lacking in public high schools (Meier, 2002; Noddings, 1992). Whereas aesthetic caring focuses attention on objects or processes and tends to be presented as a neutral, one-size-fits-all form of attention (though it is far from neutral in actuality), authentic caring practices "follow from and flow through relationships cultivated between teacher and student," leading to a "willingness [of a student] to reveal his/her essential self" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 21). Noddings' notion of aesthetic caring dovetails nicely with the Mexican notion of *educación*, which includes a sense of "moral, social and personal responsibility and serves as the foundation for all other learning… Though inclusive of formal academic training, *educación* additionally refers to competence in the social world, wherein "one respects the dignity and individuality of others" (p. 23). Valenzuela posits that all Mexican-heritage students, first generation or U.S.-born, come to school with a desire for *educación*, and when they encounter the detached form of aesthetic caring on display at the school, frustration begins and the seeds of opposition are planted.

The second part of Valenzuela's theoretical framework is based upon the idea of subtractive assimilation, which is similar to Olsen's description of Americanization (Olsen, 1997). Subtractive assimilation is the notion that in order for immigrant students to fit into American society, they must lose, or subtract, their "foreign-ness" from their essential identities; because this cannot be accomplished without depreciating their home cultures and language, this is ultimately a destructive process. For students entering American society from a Latino culture, subtractive assimilation means abandoning Spanish as the preferred language of academic and social communication, shifting from group- and family-oriented identities to subscribe to an individualist model of mobility (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 29; (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986a), and accepting the bias toward European-American values and history inherent in the standard U.S. curriculum (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 15). Many immigrants arrive with deference toward authority figures and appreciation for the opportunity to extend their education. Valenzuela complicates these oft-heralded behaviors by pointing out that in actuality, they may be preventing immigrant students and their families from seeing the obstacles that the structures of U.S. schools place in their pathways to success. A chief example of this is the isolation that occurs for English Language Learners when they are placed in intensive immersion programs. Students who exit these programs (and many do not) are often then enrolled in the "regular track" programs in English, which seldom prepare students academically for post-secondary study. Thus they are formally relegated to the bottom tiers of educational opportunity. Though American society frequently lauds the immigrant students who leap over or pass through ESL programs to become high-

achieving students (C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001), the vast majority of secondary immigrant students remain stuck in this "horizontal tracking" system or drop out (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 138; (Anyon, 1980, 1995; Fry, 2005a; Oakes, 2005).

The third element in Valenzuela's theoretical framework is Bourdieu's concept of social capital, "exchange relationships" that "enable the attainment of goals that cannot be obtained individually" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 27). Many immigrants arrive with supportive networks within the community and family, and pride in their culture and heritage, and quickly develop positive networks at school based upon their "pro-school" ethos and initiative. However, Valenzuela states that "a pro-school ethos among socially capitaled youth is no match against an invisible system of tracking that excludes its vast majority" (pp. 28-29). By shunning immigrant students' social capital networks currently in existence and depriving students access to correct information on how to advance academically, the term "social de-capitalization" is more appropriate for the forces that weigh against students' success (p. 28). Thus, many immigrant students fall into the same trap as their U.S.-born peers; faced with dead-end options, students in the first generation and their offspring come to lose faith in the schooling system and their motivation to succeed on its terms.

Together, the three cultural forces (aesthetic caring, subtractive assimilation, and social de-capitalization) combine to stack the odds against immigrant students' success and create a social division between achievement-oriented immigrant students and their more cynical U.S.-born peers. Immigrants' deference to authorities comes to be seen by peers as humiliating and naïve, whereas the immigrants often view their U.S.-born

colleagues' school behaviors as wasteful and disrespectful. Thus the potential for fostering positive bicultural relations among the student body is lost, along with the opportunity for a united challenge to the debilitating subtractive schooling regime.

Valenzuela offers some recommendations for improving the schooling lives of Mexican youth in a brief conclusion. She advocates an "additive" solution to schooling that would reverse many of the forces against student success. To achieve this, the curriculum would have to change drastically, from a standardized and inflexible body of knowledge to one that would permit "culturally relevant" materials and pedagogy to take prominence in highly segregated schools such as Seguín High (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995b, 2004). Additionally, teachers and other school personnel would need to modify their practices from an aesthetic caring orientation to one that more authentically embraces the cultures, backgrounds, and personal traits of students. The social capital that is already present in Mexican communities ought to harnessed, not shunned; she points to the success that female students demonstrate in sustaining pro-school networks as a model, though there is also the caveat that many times, these female students subjugate their academic and personal needs to those of their male colleagues (See also Olsen, 1997; Bettie, 2003). Finally, as both a means of improving student achievement in schools and as a means of increasing graduates' viability in a globalized work force, schools should embrace and foster the bilingual, bicultural perspectives and abilities that most Seguín students already possess. Since duBois first posited the potentially empowering dual frame of reference for African-Americans in American society, it has been applied to many repressed groups in our culture; it is certainly relevant here

(Anzaldúa, 1999; duBois, 1903/1953; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; M. M. Suárez-Orosco, 2005).

Valdés – *Learning and Not Learning English* (2001)

Guadalupe Valdés takes a case study approach as she follows four middle school-age Mexican immigrant students in a Northern California middle school. The impetus for her study was the California schools' emphasis on writing instruction in the early 1990s; Valdés wished to see, through her observations of the four students' lives and analyses of their work, how this emphasis translated into work conducted in ESL classrooms. She embedded herself in classrooms as an "involved observer," an assistant to the teacher, in order to get closer to students and their work, and in order to "contribute to both social science research and educational practice" (Valdés, 2001, p. xi).

As her theoretical framework, Valdés embraced as an ideal the primary goal of multicultural education as laid out by Banks (2004): "a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates… content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women's studies" (p. xiii). In order to contrast this educational equity goal with the historically poor performance of immigrant students, she adopted Kohl's (1991, cited in Valdés, 2001) notion of "not-learning" as a "milder form of opposition" to school learning than outright rebellion; as a result of ineffectual school practices, unchallenging curricula, inadequate resources, and culturally insensitive practices, many students show their dissatisfaction not by outwardly rebelling and disrupting instruction, but by disengaging from the process of learning English and

content material in schools (Valdés, 2001, p. 3). Also influencing Valdés' theoretical stance and personal involvement in school life was her own experiences growing up as a Spanish bilingual student in American schools, particularly the "pain, embarrassment, and shame" she was made to feel for her bilingual/bicultural abilities (Valdés, 2001, p. 6).

With these broad theoretical stances in place, Valdés focused on literacy instruction for ESL students, bringing to bear what language acquisition experts recommend as appropriate instructional practices to complement language acquisition processes (TESOL, 1997; Wong-Fillmore, 1991) as well as the sociopolitical question of "how much English is enough English to allow students to participate meaningfully in courses taught in English" (Valdés, 2001, p. 17; See also Gee, 1990).

When she compares the recommended instructional practices to the actual instruction that the students receive, she finds abysmal results. At the end of two years of observations, she characterizes students' writing as "seriously flawed" (Valdés, 2001, p. 147). Students have been subjected to instruction that grossly neglects their performance abilities; even students who have shown mastery of expected material are retained in the "ESL ghetto" in order to assist newly arrived peers. The ESL textbooks are largely grammar-driven, standing in stark contrast to the more communicative focus of texts for "foreign language" instruction and the recommendations of appropriate practices (TESOL, 1997; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Teachers utilize a second grade basal for reading instruction, but do not present effective reading strategies, such as "reading for gist, skimming and scanning, and guessing details from context" (p. 78). Preparing for standardized assessments, teachers abandon all pretenses of recommended practices for

second language learners. No measures are taken of students' reading abilities in their native Spanish, nor are there efforts to recognize and capitalize upon the "philosophical and moral issues" present in even the earliest student writing in English (p. 89). Only one student manages to escape the "ESL ghetto" (p. 145) when his parents remove him from the highly segregated milieu of his original middle school and enroll him in a school located in a part of town populated by highly educated families, where his native language is seen as an asset and quick progress in learning English is an expectation.

Given Valdés's depiction of the types of instruction and educational opportunities that are presented to the newcomer immigrant students, their disengagement after two years is well-warranted; these middle school students and families find themselves trapped in a "pedagogy of poverty" (p. 59), where even high-achieving, linguistically talented students are held captive in stultifying environments so as to assist the teachers in their work with the latest wave of new arrivals.

Whereas Valdés states that her intent is not to place blame, but to "contribute to both Social Science research and educational practice" (p. 17), her depictions of classroom activities are tinged with anger. She questions many of the instructional practices and programmatic decisions and offers numerous recommendations for change. Chief among these is the abandonment of the notion that ESL instruction means teaching "just language," which she finds "untenable" (p. 155; See Gee, 1990 for a complete argument of why this is linguistically impossible). Students must be exposed to academic content commensurate with their English-speaking peers and must be given the metacognitive strategies that successful learners use in reading and other facets of

academic work. To assist this, all adults in schools must rally behind the notion that they are stakeholders in ELL student success, not simply those who teach in the "ESL ghetto." To assist linguistic and social development, ELLs must have access to the interpersonal language of their peers, not remain isolated from them until they reach a prescribed level of fluency. And students' strengths in their native languages must be explored more deeply, not simply in the category of Language Arts, but in other content areas as well.

Looking more broadly, Valdés presents the documented failure of ELL students as a challenge to the public school ideology of addressing social inequity. Despite the "best efforts" of educators, within the current institutional structures, many talented students are turned off to the world of education (Valdés, 2001, p. 17)

Other relevant ethnographic studies

The American Kathleen Hall traveled to Northeast England to conduct an ethnography of first and second-generation Sikh immigrant youth in British public schools (K. D. Hall, 2002). There, the students encounter within the system a normalizing discourse of "Britishness" (which does not recognize them despite their heritage under the British imperial system) and a "new cultural racism" which asserts the unbridgeable differences between peoples while simultaneously invoking the notion of a colorblind system of social justice, thereby truncating conversations about minority needs and rights and affirming white hegemonic positions (K. D. Hall, 1998, pp. 118-119). With this depiction of British social formulations, it does not appear likely that rational approaches such as formal schooling can combat the irrational constructs of racism. However, Hall also documents the existence of Bhabha's notion of "third spaces"—when

immigrant youth occupy positions cultural spaces inherited from the native land nor of their new country, but one of their own continual (re)making (Bhabha cited in K. D. Hall, 2002; See also (Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2000; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; E. Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, & Collazo, 2004). Hall highlights how the Sikh youth manage to resist categorization as either "non-British" or subcontinental Indian, and forge unique identities. With Sikh youth creatively constructing their identities, especially via the highly influential mass media, Hall holds onto an optimism that racism is giving way in the rapidly diversifying British society.

Julie Bettie (Bettie, 2003) utilizes a race-class-gender theoretical construct to describe high school girls' lives in a rural California town. She contends that America's preoccupation with race themes and a simultaneous pervasive ideology of upward mobility have blinded theorists to the importance of class issues, and that young women go largely unrepresented in class-focused studies. The young women she represented in her study demonstrated agency in appropriating class-based markers of style (mainly through consumption patterns and visual presentation) though were limited in their stylistic choices by the rigid boundaries of class distinctions. Whereas some young women could "move up" in class by a careful appropriation of style, some (mostly Mexican-American) young women "moved down" in rejecting the white, middle-class definitions of successful living. Of particular import to this study were her depictions of several recent immigrants. Because of their grounding in a non-American culture and because of the limits of "passing" due to skin color, these students were "neither duped by achievement ideology or blindly assimilated, but rather were able to hold onto both

hope and a practical cynicism" (Bettie, 2003, p. 155). Similarly, some Mexican-American students were able to create their own dual perspective by forming school-based activities that reinforced their cultural heritage and provided the social capital for upward mobility, making schooling a "less colonizing" force (p. 160).

DISCUSSION OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIES

The following themes appear as commonalities to the works just discussed. I read the repetition of themes across works as a triangulation of findings within the field of newcomer ethnographies. The themes are:

The positive roles that immigrant students play within their schools in the view of adults, and the negative roles that they play in the views of American-born peers – Especially in the beleaguered schools described by Olsen (1997) and Valenzuela (1999), the "pro-school ethos" of immigrant students serve as a kind of saving grace for their teachers, a respite from the hostility, challenges to authority, and apathy commonplace among the American-born student body. Though Valenzuela (1999) mentions this explicitly, in all of the studies, the authors demonstrate how the goodwill and deference accorded by immigrant students and their families to the schools may actually work to their detriment. Suárez-Orosco and Suárez-Orosco (2001) expand on this premise, adding that linguistic barriers, undocumented resident status, struggles for economic survival, cultural attitudes toward schooling institutions, and/or relief from war, destitution, and corruption all contribute to a silence that may be falsely perceived as deference by school personnel. School authorities often accept gratitude from families at face value; rarely do they dig beneath the surface to educate families about the functions

and processes of the school system, or how to advocate effectively on behalf of their children. Nor, admittedly, is this kind of education easy to implement, for all the same reasons that the silence prevails.

Conversely, immigrant students often face a hostility from their peers that goes beyond the American adolescent exercise of categorizing based upon appearance (Olsen, 1997; Bettie, 2003). They are attacked for speaking their native tongues, then belittled for attempting flawed English (Olsen, 1997). Minority students who strive for academic success may be accused of "going white" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986b; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001) or, in the absence of white students, they are ridiculed by peers for persisting in naïve hopes for advancement, to the point where their persistence is seen as an act of ethnic betrayal (Valenzuela, 1999). In a replication of larger cultural myths, immigrant students are equated as "the competition," whether for menial jobs or for university admissions (Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999; Bettie, 2003). Perversely, it may be that a combination of immigrants students' vulnerability and American-born students' hostility serve as justification to prevent greater mixing of the two groups in academic settings, so that these breaches in communication can be more healthily addressed. For the time being, "immigrant optimism" (Kao & Tienda, 1995) is a luxury primarily for the teachers who work with them, not a force to be utilized for the benefit of a larger school community or even for the academic advancement of the immigrant students themselves.

Americanization as a subtractive process – To become American means to learn English, to forget your native tongue, and to set aside, at least in public, representations of home culture. According to conventional wisdom, this is the price most immigrant-

born students have had to pay in order to achieve success in this country (Olneck, 2004). In actuality, this process typically results in a racialization of immigrant identity and because most contemporary immigrants are not white, it relegates them to subordinate status in American society.

Each of the works provides examples of young people who resist the Americanization process as handed to them and instead form unique identities as hybrids of native culture, American culture, and their own idiosyncratic formations. Hall is perhaps the most optimistic in pointing out the psychologically productive and economically viable third spaces that Sikh youth forge en masse in contemporary British society (2002). There is no doubt that American society occasionally accepts new cultural forms as a result of concentrated groups of immigrant youth, though the hegemonic forces of Americanization seem to hold much greater sway as the determiner of young people's educational and social opportunities.

Americanization can mean different things depending on the context. In Olsen's racially diverse Madison High School, the students saw "American" as white, middle-class, and Christian (1997). In Valenzuela's highly segregated Seguín High, the immigrant students looked at their Chicano classmates as the Americans (1999). As Portes and Rimbaut have documented, regardless of the image, the Americanizing process has decidedly negative ramifications for the social, emotional, and even physical well-being of immigrant students and their families (Portes & Rumbaut, 1997).

The immoral acts of teachers and other school personnel in immigrant students' lives – All of the authors cite numerous instances where school personnel, including

teachers, counselors, and administrators have sent denigrating or demoralizing messages to their students. Moreover, each of them provides instances of low-quality instruction, Valdés being the most adamant in her depiction of instructional atrocities (2001). When teachers are presented as beneficent models, it is with the certitude that they are the exception rather than the rule.

Olsen and Valdés both take pains at the outset to state that teachers' lives are buffeted by many of the same forces that their students face: reducing funding and public support of public education, an increasingly unstable economy with less secure futures, continuing controversies over bilingual education and the free, public education of immigrant students. Olsen writes, "Teachers grapple with how to teach students with whom they share neither a community nor national background, culture, or language… Teachers are divided over whether and how to respond… [T]hose who might be effective advocates for more inclusive and fair programs and practices are often silenced or neutralized" (1996, p. 26). This declaration of the complex and conflicted positionalities of teachers is overshadowed, however, by Olsen's presentation of the majority of teachers and administrators as interested in preserving a decidedly white, middle class cultural dominance of the school community.

The sham of a class-blind, race-blind, gender-blind meritocracy – For immigrant students, arguably the most motivated, positively-oriented, physically healthy group of students in our urban schools (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Portes & Rumbaut, 1997; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001), the notion that the public education system operates as a neutral meritocracy has been roundly disproven.

Tracking has long been decried by educational researchers as a racist, classist, and gender-biased means of determining students' fates (Anyon, 1980, 1995; Harklau, 1994; Hartwell, 1985; Oakes, 2005). For immigrant students, tracking has a particular poignancy – many of them never escape the "ESL ghetto" in order to get even to the lowest-level "academic" classes. For immigrant students, many times, the sole goal expressed for them has been the acquisition of English; as a consequence, the bulk of their coursework and preparation center on this task to the exclusion of comprehensive academic development and college preparation. NCLB and Texas legislation continue to push high-stakes testing into other content areas, but this has come to mean that the course contents are delivered in the style of the tests they will take, not as a dedicated pursuit of the subject matter (McNeil, 2000).

While we Americans tend to celebrate the triumph of a select few students who speed through or vault over ESL programs to become resounding academic successes, the fact remains that the vast majority of immigrant students at the secondary level will not gain access to college-track classes in the course of their public education, in spite of their hard work and demonstrated ability (Bettie, 2003; Fry, 2005a; Harklau, 1994). Some students will have teacher-advocates or other caring mentors who will assist them in their opportunities to pursue a more challenging academic program but even these students face tremendous forces weighing against their success.

Most of the teachers who were studied in these ethnographies were white and middle-class. Just as many of their race and class, they have never seriously questioned the rhetoric of meritocracy and color-blindness that pervades their way of thinking about

American society (Delpit, 1995; McIntosh, 1988; Scheurich, 1997) . Whether white teachers can look across the same campus to see highly successful students or they have to look across town, many times, these teachers reach personal conclusions about the cultural deficits of other cultural groups than their own. As unjust and immoral as these conclusions may be, American public school educators and the institutions who train them rarely talk about themselves as the possible propagators of inequity. Instead, by and large teaching continues to be seen as a politically neutral act.

The gulf between the recommendations of the ethnographers and the continued practices of public schools – Each of the ethnographers recommends, in his or her own way, a dramatic reworking of the education for secondary ELLs that would include culturally additive curricula (Valenzuela, 1999), a decrease in the isolation of ELLs (Olsen, 1997), increased attention to students' individual language and cognitive growth and needs (Valdés, 1996), and an frank reckoning with the societal forces keeping immigrant and other minority students from attaining greater academic and social success (Olsen, 1997). However, the combination of a century of inertia in assimilating immigrant students through public schools with the current accountability structures dominating political and academic discourse presents few viable options for those interested in reform. This state's and nation's high-stakes accountability regimes rhetorically reinforce the idea of a color-blind meritocracy while simultaneously demonstrating the impossibility of such a concept. There is a logical inconsistency in the premise that all students can be "tested equally" while those who have to make the most linguistic and academic gains in order to succeed are given insufficient time and funding

to do so (Crawford, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Valenzuela, 2004). Within schools, a tangible sense of panic about how to speed up the language acquisition of English Language Learners so that schools will reach prescribed targets on test performances is reinforced by the official policies (NCLB, 2001; (Scarcella, 2003). These policies boldly contradict years of research on academic language acquisition (Cummins, 2003; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Ovando *et al.*, 2006; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). In other words, for those at the classroom level who pay attention to research and policy, there occurs a tumultuous clash of ideologies, with few pathways that can satisfy the tenets of the differing belief systems. This is most apparent in approaches to explicit language instruction, the subject of the next section.

APPROACHES TO EXPLICIT LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR SECONDARY ELLS

In this era, where high-stakes multiple-choice examinations and standardized curricula largely determine students' educational fates, traditional notions of grammar and explicit grammar instruction for secondary ELLs have found a new audience after decades of emphasis on less rule-bound and more communication-focused instructional methodologies (Hinkel & Fotos, 2002; Ovando *et al.*, 2006; Scarcella, 2003). This raises the question of what grammar means in the life of the second language learner – is it a codified list of rules of a language, to be taken at face value, or is grammar a more nuanced and elusive attempt to describe the rules of language? By examining a current (though partial) landscape of relevant discussions, including those directed toward a practitioner audience, I present a range of perspectives on the subject of grammar,

including one closely aligned to the prevailing language of accountability and standardization (Scarcella, 2003). I begin by echoing numerous scholars' positions that all grammar discourses are in of themselves indicators of power relations (Gee, 1990; Delpit, 1995; Smitherman, 2000; Ball & Muhammad, 2003; Cliett, 2003); grammar instruction can be used as a promising means of fostering student entry into cultures of power or it can be employed as a continuously shifting line of demarcation between those who are fluent and those who are not, even while grammar teachers claim (and often believe) that they are teaching fixed, universal rules of the English language (Ball & Muhammad, 2003; Cliett, 2003; Gray & Heuser, 2003; Hairston, 1981; Hartwell, 1985; Williams, 1981). In the latter case, grammar instruction can actually become the barrier that prohibits non-native speakers of English from reaching a level of fluency effective inside the corridors of prestige. The disturbing yet logically consistent outcome of this trend is a distancing of ELL students from the goal of a useful degree of academic fluency.

James Gee & Social Discourse Theory – Expanding the notion of "grammar"

The social discourse theories of James Gee represent one theoretical standpoint from which to view the teaching and learning of language in school-based settings. As a critical social linguist, Gee charges himself with the task of discourse analysis – the close examination of naturally occurring language and text so as to reveal power relations as well as the tacit and explicit theories held by individuals. His particular intent is to uncover ideologies, which he defines as "social theor[ies] which involve generalizations… about the way(s) in which 'goods' are distributed in a society" (Gee,

1990, p. 23). Language is one such 'good;' there are many kinds of languages in circulation in human society but only some of them carry the cachet of economic and social power, and those have limited distribution.[2] Knowing the ideologies at play give a social actor recourse to action, including the unmasking of discriminatory theories, beliefs, and actions. This form of knowledge also compels a moral obligation to propagate more equitable theories, beliefs, and actions.

In addition to calling language a societal 'good,' Gee defines language as but one of many elements in his idea of discourse. "Discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (Gee, 1990, p. 142). A person's discourses (and each of us have many) display his/her memberships in particular social groups and social networks. Beneath these discourses lie distinctions rooted in ideologies; because of this, discourses are intimately tied to issues of social power (Gee, 1990, p. 144; See also Bettie, 2003). Unlike Foucault, who sees no escape from the regulatory functions of power (S. Hall, 1981; J. Ryan, 1991), Gee holds out hope that emancipatory teaching[3] can occur once the ever-present ideologies are laid bare, and both the possibilities and limitations of classroom instruction are defined.

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[2] Cf. Apple (1996) for a neo-Marxist analysis of the distribution of social goods such as education, and Brandt (2001) for a more pointed economic analysis of the distribution of literacies in American society.

[3] The term "emancipatory teaching" comes from Freire (1970), who sought, like Gee, to bring all members society to a full state of consciousness of the oppressive conditions under they operate. Apple (2001) rejects Freire's notion that oppressors are not operating with a complete consciousness as oversimplifying the oppressors' rationales for behavior. He credits oppressor groups with very deliberate coalition-forming and strategizing that have captured the public imagination, and suggests that leftist groups have much to learn from their ideological opponents.

As in any classroom, multiple discourses are ever-present in the English as Second Language settings. ESL teachers primarily strive to teach their students the rules of the language of the dominant discourse (which is itself an assemblage of discourses both locally situated and more broadly based). Though Gee goes into considerable detail when describing the roles and responsibilities of teachers, he rejects the idea that languages can be 'taught' in the way that other school subjects – mathematics, science, etc. – are taught. "The teacher of English is not, in fact, teaching English, and certainly not English grammar, or even 'language.' Rather, she is teaching a set of discourse practices, oral and written, connected with the standard dialect of English. More importantly, she is apprenticing students to "dominant, school-based social practice" (Gee, 1990, p. 67). Using the same distinction that Krashen (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) has long used between *learning* ("conscious knowledge gained through teaching") and *acquisition* ("acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practice within social groups"), Gee goes on to argue that if our goal of second language instruction is facility with the dominant discourse, approaches must be based far more in processes of acquisition than of learning (Gee, 1990, pp. 146-147). Learning, such as explicit grammar instruction, may be good for awareness of language functions, but on its own, it can never lead a student to fluency in the dominant discourse. Acquisition, which Gee advocates through "apprenticeships" in the dominant discourse, where students are surrounded and scaffolded by people who have already mastered the discourse, is the only means to facility in the standard dialect. "Nothing comes from

literacy and schooling…Much follows, however, from what comes with literacy and schooling" (Gee, 1990, p. 42; his emphasis).

Gee expands the notion of grammar to mean more than the codified rules of a language. He begins with the "truism" that "a person can know the *grammar* of a language and still not know how to *use* that language" (p. 139; his emphasis). By this, he means that a person can speak a grammatically "correct" English for a given sociocultural setting (be it a biker bar or a university seminar) yet still demonstrate social irregularities (part of the larger discourse) that prevent his acceptance. Conversely, a person may make grammatical "mistakes" but still function effectively in a given sociocultural sector. In contemporary American society, the latter case is a rare phenomenon because the rules of the dominant discourse of Standard English typically dictate against surface-level grammatical errors; these errors are often used to distinguish those who are 'insiders' in the culture of power from those who are not (Gee, 1990, p. 147; 1992). A speaker must be able to say the 'right' thing while doing the 'right' thing so as to express the beliefs, values, and attitudes that will gain acceptance within a discourse (duBois, 1903/1953).

While prioritizing opportunities for fluency through acquisition, conscientious teachers must also teach both the rules of language that fall under the traditional category of grammar and the larger social cues, rules, and procedures of the dominant discourse. Gee encourages teachers to take advantage of the meta-awareness that second language students naturally have by virtue of the ongoing comparisons they make to their first languages. Gee's "meta-awareness" does not merely correspond to a contrastive

linguistic ability; it includes the ability to compare language structures, but it also implies the kind of "double consciousness" DuBois attributed to the African-American community, which has historically navigated both within dominant discourses as oppressed subjects, and within discourses of home communities where they formed the mainstream (1903/1953). Similarly, and perhaps more relevant to discussions of ELLs, Anzaldúa (1987) describes Latino/a-Americans as having a "mestiza consciousness" that permits greater flexibility and toleration of ambiguity across discourse communities (See also Bettie, 2003; Moje, 2004). However, in enlisting the benefits of this meta-awareness, Gee cautions that just as not all of a traditional grammar can be taught to students, nor can all of a discourse. Teachers must judiciously instruct students in the formal rules of language while they maximize opportunities for acquisition. These opportunities best arise in the apprenticeships.

According to Gee, teaching for discourse awareness implies a teacher's complicity in the change of identity and the presentation of a "reality set" that may conflict with their home cultures (Gee, 1990, p. 66). The mainstream discourse may present values that are in opposition to or denigrating of the values within the home discourse. Many have chronicled the chasm between discourses which leave second language learners with tremendous internal conflict (Rodriguez, 1983; Valdés, 1996; Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999, Martínez-Roldán & Malavé, 2004). Nevertheless, the conscientious teacher has little choice but to accept this mode of teaching for as long as there remains a dominant discourse that is not a part of the student's home culture.

Ultimately, despite the potential costs, "Meta-knowledge is power, because it leads to the ability to manipulate, to analyze, to resist while advancing" (Gee, 1990, p. 148).

Contrasting Gee's view with much more standard interpretations of Standard Written English yields dramatic distinctions. Rather than Gee's notion of a discourse, which resides not within any one person but exists as a socially created and shifting system, the English commonly taught in schools is treated as a relatively fixed entity, one that has been codified and laid out as rules and exercises in grammar textbooks for absorption and assimilation by students. If this absorption is incomplete, blame rests with the students or the teacher, not with the dominant discourse, which by its own logic has made the language perfectly clear for consumption. Realizing Gee's proposals would require a radical reworking of our current methods and systems for educating the hundreds of thousands of ELLs in public schools today. Perhaps that is why Gee frames his cause as a moral imperative; mere innovation is too easy to dismiss.

Celce-Murcia – Bringing explicit grammar instruction back to language instruction

In the early 1990's, Celce-Murcia began to argue for a reintroduction of grammar to second language instruction, a practice that had fallen out of favor in the late 1960s with the rejection of behaviorist teaching techniques and the increased attention given to second-language fluidity and communicative competence. After stating that the goal of language instruction ought to be "accuracy as well as fluency," she cites several studies that indicate that in classrooms where error correction does not occur, students have developed broken, pidginized versions of English that appear to "fossilize," or plateau at incomplete levels of production (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 462). Having argued that

grammar instruction should not be ruled out from classroom instruction, she then proposes a matrix by which teachers can determine the importance of explicit grammar instruction for individual students and classrooms (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Celce-Murcia's Matrix of Grammar Instruction

Variables that Determine the Importance of Grammar

Less important ← Focus on Form → More important			
Learning variables			
Age Proficiency Educational background	Children Beginning Preliterate, no formal education	Adolescents Intermediate Semiliterate, some formal education	Adults Advanced Literate, well educated
Instructional variables			
Skill Register Need/use	Listening, reading Informal Survival	Speaking Consultative Vocational	Writing Formal Professional

From "Grammar Pedagogy in Second and Foreign Language Teaching, " M. Celce Murcia, 1991, TESOL Quarterly 25(3), p. 465

Celce-Murcia adamantly emphasizes that unlike the behaviorist-driven language instruction that was heavily based upon grammatical terms and structures, "Grammar should never be taught as an end in itself but always with reference to meaning, social factors, or discourse – or a combination of these factors" (p. 466-467). ("Discourse" here means a collection of interrelated sentences without the infusion of power dynamics ascribed by Gee; Celce-Murcia's approach is apolitical throughout. I discuss this in greater detail below.) Like Gee, she generally favors grammar learned inferentially from a large corpus of natural discourse, and only after significant prior

exposure to natural language. Nevertheless, as the matrix demonstrates, individual and instructional factors may point toward the need at times to explicitly relate grammatical rules and functions. The gravity of student errors should also serve as a strong indicator of need for instruction; she distinguishes sentence-level errors, which usually do not compromise the overall intended meaning of the message, from discourse-level errors, which interrupt understanding.

Befitting her advocacy of grammar instruction within a communicative curriculum, Celce-Murcia provides a brief list of types of error correction that teachers can employ in their classes in addition to direct instruction and teaching correction of student written work and speech. She references studies that attempt to measure the effectiveness of the induction of grammar rules through the presentation of exemplars. One study added the twist of intentionally applying an overgeneralization of a common grammatical rule to an irregular structure, then immediately correcting it with the students (Tomasello and Herron, 1988, in Celce-Murcia, 1991). Current cognitive research in category learning also suggests that this method may be effective for two reasons. By directly invoking meaning-making functions, induction of categories (schemata) may be a more effective way of building long-term category structures than the presentation of *a priori* categorical systems. Moreover, a novelty or surprise effect can positively influence retention in long-term memory (Love, Medin, & Gureckis, 2004).

As situations of grammar correction arise in the course of instruction, Celce-Murcia favors a process she dubs “minigrammar lessons.” In these instances, the teacher

interrupts the planned lesson, corrects it, works with students to generate a rule or paradigm, then asks students to work on several examples. The teacher then picks up the lesson where it left off.

Celce-Murcia seeks a purposeful reintroduction of grammar into predominantly communicative language instruction. Though her framework for deciding when to instruct for grammar is probably too mechanistic for realistic classroom use, it at least recognizes that correctness in language has many different influences, and it rises and falls in importance depending on the forum for language production and the role of the student in that production. By demonstrating her case for grammar instruction as a decision-making matrix, Celce-Murcia acknowledges the need for teachers to consider the contingency of the instructional settings of their students and the needs that arise outside the classroom.

In advocating an insertion of "real-time" grammar instruction to ESL curricula as they typically exist, as logical progressions through prescribed orders of language development, Celce-Murcia glosses over the many power dynamics that Gee illuminates. By doing so, her matrix and discussion risk essentializing students in their stages of fluency and educational development. For example, placing all "Children, Beginning ESL Students, and Preliterate Students" in the same category as needing less formal language instruction may be a useful heuristic for planning lessons but it generalizes at the risk of framing both Beginning ESL students and preliterate students as child-like. This is especially troublesome when considering dynamics of race and class, given that the vast majority of ESL students in this country are ethnic minorities in working-class or

lower socioeconomic positions. Moreover, situations may arise in the lives of older students that compel teachers to break from less formal instruction in order to give students more specific language to aid their negotiations in out-of-classroom settings. Celce-Murcia mentions the primacy of "survival" for Beginning and Preliterate students in her matrix; hopefully, survival skills can also be forward-thinking if students have opportunities to learn, then produce formal language for particular requirements.

Reading with Gee's analytic framework into the discourse of the article itself reveals that Celce-Murcia has designed the piece for a conservative practitioner audience, one more interested in tinkering with instruction than overhauling practices and correcting injustices. Whereas judgments of correctness for Gee are contingent upon the milieus of language production and the various social-political ramifications of speech acts, here, correctness depends upon the teachers' determinations of "grammatical accuracy" (p. 465). For Celce-Murcia, "meaning, social factors, or discourse" refer primarily to the language used within classrooms, not outside, though teachers may create rehearsals of scenarios likely to take place outside classroom settings (p. 467). The language of "normal" schooling (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) shapes Celce-Murcia's approach to grammar instruction, such as when she suggests the task of "writing a report" (p. 475) or methods of integrating grammar into a fixed curriculum (p. 474).

Introduced 15 years ago, Celce-Murcia's notion of context-based grammar instruction has been updated and amplified by the development of corpus linguistics, studies of usage based upon extensive databases of language samples that can be sorted and analyzed (Celce-Murcia, 2002; Conrad, 2000; Ellis, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2002).

Using corpus-based samples, Celce-Murcia argues, teachers can call up and demonstrate grammatical choices available to students and the nuances of those choices (2002).

Despite this relatively recent innovation, grammar instruction in the field continues to be dominated by the "3Ps" – presentation, practice, and production (Ellis, 2006; Hinkel & Fotos, 2002). Rod Ellis attributes the persistence of this traditional form of instruction to a lack of understanding among the teaching community of linguistics, and a still-murky and much-contested understanding among the scientific community of the role of L1 in L2 language learning, and of the workings of a subconscious interlanguage (2006). To his rationales I would add the ascendancy of standards-based instruction and high-stakes testing, which has prioritized discrete and disconnected bits of knowledge over notions of fluid and proficient authentic performance. A recent example of the reification of traditional grammar instruction is provided in the next section.

Scarcella: *Accelerating Academic English* (2003)

Accelerating Academic English (Scarcella, 2003) was published by the Regents of the University of California as a companion piece to the state's implementation of standards-based instruction and high-stakes assessments.[4] It can be read partly as a full-throttled assault against Stephen Krashen's "natural approach" theory of language acquisition, which has held sway among significant numbers of California teachers since its debut in the early 1980s. According to Krashen, knowledge of the rules of grammar falls under the category of explicit *learning*, whereas correct language can be more

[4] The book holds special interest for me as an educator in my local school district; the Department of Bilingual Education adopted it in 2004 as the source text for a revamping of the district's bilingual education policies and practices.

effectively *acquired* through long-term exposure to the target language (especially written text) and through opportunities to practice in stress-reduced situations (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Referring indirectly to Krashen's predominance, Scarcella states, "Teaching the forms, functions, and meanings of English grammar requires knowledge of English grammar that many of our teachers lack. One reason that English teachers and others no longer know much grammar is that second language researchers and compositionists have often de-emphasized the importance of grammar" (Scarcella, 2003, p. 64). Though many others have had this same complaint,[5] the stamp of the University of California on the book's spine gives it a particular imprimatur.

Scarcella clearly attempts to turn the state's language teachers forcefully in another direction in language instruction, one consistent with the national right-wing push for a "conservative modernization" of curriculum and teaching practices (Apple, 2001; Gutiérrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002). At the outset, she states, "Over the past twenty years or so, little attention has been given to teaching academic English… A new appreciation for the teaching of academic English is beginning to emerge in the state of California" (p.1).

Scarcella's "appreciation" is consistent with state and federal initiatives. She explains her work as a complement to the state's standards-driven curriculum, its high-stakes standardized assessments, and even the Hampton-Brown textbook series it adopted to use with the state's English Language Learners. Though there are questions, she notes,

[5] Visit http://www.angelfire.com/az/english4thechildren/krashen.html to see the lengths to which Krashen's theories on bilingual education provoke outrage and his own website www.skrashen.com for his many feisty retorts.

about the equity of funding and about the passing of Proposition 227 (which dramatically reduced bilingual education programs in California), Scarcella adopts a diehard tone: "Today, many of the old principles are pointless. Since all instruction is tied to California state standards and the core curriculum, overarching principles that are not directly aligned to the standards and the curriculum are often irrelevant. They are vague and their effectiveness is difficult to assess empirically" (p. 10). This "toughen up" attitude is also revealed in her take on retention, which has elsewhere been strongly correlated to high dropout rates (Wood, 2004). Scarcella, in contrast, views retention as a boon for ELLs: "Sometimes… successful learners are given the additional advantage of being held back in school one or two grades" (Scarcella, 2003, p. 47).

Scarcella uses the terms Academic English and Standard English interchangeably in the text, though she defines each differently. Scarcella blithely describes Standard English, quite simply, as "the variety of English that is often used by educated people. It is used in news broadcasts and other formal circumstances" (Scarcella, 2003, p. 7). Academic English is the language used by academic disciplines and though each varies according to the uses and traditions of the discipline, there are enough commonalities to name a single entity. She does mention that its non-use can lead to discriminatory practices, though she stops short of advocating or educating for more open-minded approaches to language. Scarcella refers to Gee's notice of apprenticeships in the language of the dominant discourse but apparently does not intend the full meaning of his definition of apprenticeship, where the English Language Learners are immersed in a world of supportive Standard English speakers, readers, and writers. Instead, she puts the

onus on the teachers to provide "guest lecturers, educational videos, audio cassettes, and readings" (Scarcella, 2003, p. 167). This bringing in of guests stands in sharp contrast to, and as a cheap substitute for, Gee's call to send students out to places of production, where they can be immersed in the workaday lives and languages of professionals.

The bulk of *Accelerating Academic English* concerns itself with explicit grammar instruction, which it advocates should start with students' first literacy learning experiences. The book serves as a crash course in grammar instruction for public school teachers and university professors of English Language Learners. Charts, tables, and sample exercises inform readers of all the grammar that students need to know in order to become proficient in Academic English. She provides examples of common errors made by speakers of Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong, and Spanish as well as preferred correction techniques for native Korean and Spanish speakers. (According to Scarcella, both native Korean-speakers and Spanish-speakers prefer to be corrected, the Koreans a bit more directly than the Spanish-speakers). These essentializing descriptions are indicative of the book's mission, to wash over individual differences in language learning in order to promote a standardized curriculum.

Scarcella demands nothing less than mastery of Academic English for the students of California. That is the sole asking price for entry into the dominant culture. Whereas middle-class native speakers of English acquire their academic English at home, including grammatical conventions, teachers of pre-literate immigrant students, an increasing subset of the larger immigrant populace, "will have to work twice as hard" if they are to bring their students to this uncompromising level of mastery (Scarcella, 2003,

p. 6). Her demands for instructional change, couched in terms of inclusion and cultural appreciation, are instead indicators of a destructive neo-assimilationist attitude adopted by the author and publicized by the state.

Though Scarcella calls for "enlightened practices" in grammar instruction (p. 12), she considers instruction that adjusts for learning styles and multiple intelligences "ineffective" (p. 9). Her sample "Grammar Test" and suggestions for vocabulary learning could properly be called challenging, though unless she was referring to instruction during the Enlightenment, they do not suggest enlightened or enlightening approaches to grammar. To give an example, Scarcella concludes four pages of tables demonstrating different kinds of transitions and connectors between sentences and clauses (pp. 67-70) with the sentence, "All learners need to know that the repeated use of transitions such as *so* and *and* will make their writing look overly informal and the overuse of transitions such as *first, second*, and *third* will make their writing look overly formulaic" (Scarcella, 2003, p. 70.) An enlightened educator, it seems to me, would demonstrate this common principle through conversations about the kinds of student writing that have personal significance and real-world import rather than through the elicitation of a rule. Then again, as Janet Emig has suggested, lack of reflexive writing in public schools may serve dominant classes by keeping the "'average' or 'below average' writer from doing better than what the label 'average' implies" (Emig, 1971).

The sheer abundance of grammatical terms, categories of regular and irregular formations, and proofreading marks present in Scarcella's work impose a third language upon students, one with little to no immediate social utility. This is the meta-language of

the grammarian. It is hard to see how this type of instruction could co-exist alongside the fostering of communicative ability proposed by Celce-Murcia, whom Scarcella repeatedly references in a positive light. And though Scarcella shares with Gee the ambitious desire to teach students meta-awareness of language properties, her no-compromise non-critical view of the dominance of Standard English differs markedly from his vision for pedagogical reform. Her insistence on the heavy prominence of explicit grammar instruction threatens to distance students from, not bring them closer to, the naturally occurring language they need to experience in order to achieve fluency. Standardizing policies like the ones Scarcella accepts as given have provoked outrage among much of the educator and educational researcher communities (Meier, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Valenzuela, 2004; Wood, 2004). Her uncritical acceptance of these policies has resulted in a guide to teachers with potentially grave consequences for their ELL students.

Presumably, according to Scarcella, mastery of Academic English will gain students entry to lucrative positions in society, from which they can comfortably preserve their home cultures. But as Deborah Brandt has noted, even those born into Standard English can face tremendous obstacles in reaching secure economic positions (Brandt, 2001). Scarcella's blithe optimism and naïve encouragement of a strong work ethic are characteristic of a master narrative that has been in play in the United States for many generations, and has resulted in the "structures of exclusion" that plague the poor, the ethnic minorities, and the language minorities in our country (Bettie, 2003, p. 120; see also Apple, 1990, 2001; Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999; Brandt, 2001).

In my local school district, consistent with the observations of Valdés (Valdés, 2001), explicit language instruction for secondary ELLs predominantly falls into the category of workbook- and textbook-dominated activities that present the English language as a static, rule-governed system; following the order of the textbooks and prescriptive curriculum guides, teachers present language and its concurrent rules in a sequence that textbook designers have determined most comprehensible to the English-speaking novice. For reasons of school program design, local community segregation, and interconnectivity with home cultures, it is fair to say that relatively little English penetrates students' lives outside of the classroom setting, certainly not enough to invoke Gee's idea of apprenticeships. The high-stakes accountability regime further pushes explicit language instruction into the realm of instruction that Scarcella advocates; learning enough rules to pass the rule-governed tests suffices as a norm for success, even while Scarcella bewails the considerable flaws in English that her presumably successful college-level ELLs demonstrate.

Scarcella's chief criticism of current language instruction, that students who lack a sufficient mastery of the English language are bound to have many doors of opportunity closed to them, is a well-investigated issue. Where I disagree with her and agree with Gee is that not <u>all</u> rules can or must be absorbed and put to use; instead, by paying attention to the explicit rules that seem to matter most in the larger society (Hairston, 1981), by giving credence to social cues other than the explicit rules of language (Gee, 1990), and by providing students opportunities to engage in authentic practice with successful practitioners of English outside of the classroom setting, educators will better be able to build students' panoply of linguistic and social skills at the same time that they are eliminating structural barriers that tend to keep these students isolated and monolingual.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPLIED TO EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

The bulk of research thus far presented in this review of literature has concerned itself with the macropolitical context for the academic lives of secondary ELLs through the presentation and analysis of ethnographic studies (how ethnographers see these students in their academic *milieux*) and predominant trends in the arena of explicit language instruction (what scholars advocate as the most effective pathways to fluency in English). Establishing this macropolitical foundation is an essential component for the launching of a critical discourse analysis within an educational setting; as Rogers *et al*. write, "Critical discourse analysts pay attention to the macro text - the societal and institutional as well as the local level of a text and the grammatical resources that make up the text" (Rogers *et al*., 2005). The theoretical foundations and methodologies of critical discourse analysis will be discussed in Chapter Three, when I describe the particular methodology of this project. Here, I wish to describe in brief several previous critical discourse analyses that touch on themes similar to my own study.

Meg Gebhard (2004) took a team of researchers to examine the discourses surrounding elementary-level ELLs within a technology magnet school in California's Silicon Valley, a school that heartily embraced many of the tenets of "fast-track capitalism" (Gee *et al*., 1996). Such tenets included: the breaking up of larger schools into smaller units, or "houses," to act more responsively to local contingencies; more authority placed in the hands of teachers rather than resting with an administrator; and a constructivist approach to teaching that helps students develop knowledge collaboratively. These schooling structures purposefully replicated corporate structures

that had proven successful in the region's high-tech industries, where "engineered communities of practice… socialize people into assuming new identities so that they can become new kinds of managers, new kinds of workers, and new kinds of consumers" (Gebhard, 2004, p. 246). By looking at the ELL students within a school attempting a particular kind of reform, the author drew a parallel between the marginalized ELL and the marginalized worker in order to examine the possible "quick slippage between the promise of opportunity as described by business consultants and the likelihood of new forms of marginalization as experienced by workers," which is, according to the author, "the essence of fast capitalism" (pp. 246-247).

By simultaneously treating the school as one unit of a case study and three students as other units, the author was able to examine the "macro," or institutional level of discourse concerning ELLs and students in general, and the "micro" discourses surrounding particular ELL students within classrooms. The author then looked for points of intersection between the macro and micro views in order to see how institutional identities for the ELL students were formed, negotiated, and resisted.

Gebhard's analysis focused on two areas: the construction of identities for immigrant families within the "fast-track capitalism" world of the school, and the in-class treatment of ELL student work. In both areas, she found a constructed identity for the minorities that was much more closely aligned to a traditional view of immigrant families in American society than to the tenets of a globalized, multicultural, culture. Official school policy, individual teacher comments, and parent interviews were triangulated to support the conclusion that an ELL student's parents were expected to overcome their

own language gaps in order to contribute significant amounts of time in school lest they be perceived as uncaring or unable to support their children. When budget restrictions forced a reduction in class size, standardized test scores (in English) served the purpose of highlighting the student who were least likely to achieve academic success at the magnet program; those scores, combined with parental involvement, helped the school staff decide which students were to be returned to their home campuses. In other words, not far beneath the rhetoric of collaboration lurked the specter of intense competition, another essential tenet of fast-track capitalism.

In the classrooms, a veneer of reform seemed to preclude ELLs from receiving either appropriate instruction or full acceptance as collaborative partners in learning. Taking advantage of the trappings of "fast-track" learning – clusters of tables and chairs, group book studies, peer conferences, independent exploration – meant that students had to enter the classroom already having acquired the discursive skills of this particular context for teaching and learning. For students with a primary discourse that paralleled the school setting, this was a comfortable transition (Gee, 1990). For students learning English as a non-native language alongside this new school discourse, it proved much more challenging. The texts of teacher, student, and parent talk revealed that ELLs were more likely to be constructed as remedial students than full participants in a collaborative culture; their instruction tended to focus more on the form of their work (spelling, capitalization, number of paragraphs) than on the content, and the gap in discourse abilities between the ELLs and their peers was too great to count on peer-initiated constructivist learning.

Gehbard concluded her analysis with the contention that the rhetoric of "fast-track capitalist" school reform had done little to change the construction of ELL student identities as sub-skill workers within the elementary school setting. Despite the purported desire to improve student learning for all and prepare students for a globalized discourse, "the impact of literacy practices in [teachers'] classrooms were invisible to them, and dominant ideologies regarding individualism, skills-based learning, and English monolingualism remained unquestioned" (Gebhard, 2004, p. 260; See also (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). She called for interdisciplinary research based on sociocultural perpectives on language in order to examine how language practices that exist in communities have an impact on second language learners.

Rogers (2003) conducted a critical discourse analysis using Fairclough's 3-tiered analytic framework (1995) of the text and talk surrounding an initial referral for special education. In her analysis, she found that parent resistance to special education placement was overcome by an appeal to institutional power through reliance on the positivist "truth" of standardized testing. Whereas prior studies of similar scenarios had highlighted the conficts between home and school discourses about students and the potential locus of their difficulties (be it school, home, or within the individual), in this study Rogers detailed how the parent had, as part of her ideological makeup, an alignment with the school-based discourse that allowed the disability to be placed within her child as something discoverable through testing, even as she adamantly opposed her placement in special education. In the course of this special education referral, it was not

the testing, but the appeal to testing, that served to manufacture consent among the parties involved.

Lastly, though the authors do not describe it as such, I wish to site the work of Kris Gutiérrez, Patricia Baquedano-López, and Carlos Tejeda (2000) as an example of "critical language awareness," the application of critical discourse analysis in a classroom setting in order to counter hegemonic forces (Fairclough, 1995). Gutiérrez *et al*. provide a rich example of an elementary bilingual teacher making use of "hybrid language practices," the space between "local knowledge and the official curriculum" in order to help students place their personal experiences into an institutional context and into a framework for both formal and informal learning (2000, p. 296). The teacher purposefully orchestrated this hybrid, or "third" space between home and school as a ground for emancipatory learning by allowing and incorporating language in a variety of codes and registers, including what is normally unsanctioned student-to-student "unofficial language" (p. 292), as part of the central discourse of the classroom. By doing so, the teacher created a more fluid continuum of language and learning that incorporated and thereby validated the spectrum of home and school experiences. By highlighting the differences between unofficial and official language within the "third space," and by resisting a levying of judgment upon the appropriateness of discourses inside the classroom, the teacher also allowed the students to become critical consumers and distributors of language and mediators in their own right of the differing discourses. Finally, by casting the hybrid third space as a ground for instruction, Gutiérrez *et al.*

expand the repertoire of discourses available to educators, particularly those who work in settings where the home discourse does not transition easily into school discourse (2000).

CONCLUSION

The conducting of a critical discourse analysis research project serves for me as a response to the abundance of quantitative and qualitative data that exists on the (mostly desultory) performance of ELLs in public secondary schools. In designing this research project, I wished to respond to the data in a way that would highlight my dual educator-researcher perspective; as an educator, I would like to explore language experiences that are more culturally responsive and more effective than what currently dominates classroom practice. This explains the attempt to create a "hybrid space" for communication within the school setting (Gutiérrez *et al*., 2000), a break from classroom discursive norms using the popular technology of email to establish conversations between newcomer students and successful business professionals. Yet as a researcher, I must acknowledge the powerful roles that macrostructures play in a formal schooling situation-- hence the need to remain critical, and especially, reflexively critical (Rogers *et al*., 2005). Based upon this review of literature concerning the academic lives of secondary ELLs, nothing short of a renewed concentration on the most fundamental issues of language – how words are strung together to express meanings, and the various levels of meanings that arise in the course of communication – will suffice in order to begin the pursuit of more culturally relevant, effective classroom language-based activities for newcomer students. This project, which examines the back-and-forth language in a series of email exchanges, from initial introductions to more involved

dialogue, lends itself to the kind of close analysis espoused by critical discourse analyst and required in a frank and healthy examination of the many barriers newcomer students face in their schooling lives.

Chapter Three

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology of a study that has emerged from a multifaceted investigation into the academic lives of newcomer secondary students in U.S. public schools. Qualitative and quantitative data alike overwhelmingly conclude that public schools are poorly serving their late arrival ELL students, despite the students' strong orientation toward hard work and academic achievement (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Olsen, 1997; Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999; Portes & Rumbaut, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999), and despite their seemingly advantageous positions in a globalizing, multilingual society (Lam, 2000; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001; H. Trueba, 1989). Looming beneath this well-documented lack of success are multiple layers of institutional and interpersonal barriers prohibiting all but a few immigrant "success stories" from acquiring proficiency in high-status discourses (including academic language) and their accompanying benefits. This study examines the language produced within one attempt to challenge these barriers and introduce two normally disconnected strata of society, newcomer ELLs and business professionals, via the medium of email,

Included in this chapter are the theoretical framework that has informed the methodological design, the design itself and its research tradition, criteria for participant selection, data collection methods, procedures for data analysis, and techniques that will ensure trustworthiness. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations that are inherent in this research project.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In seeking explanation for the persistent lack of success of newcomer secondary students in the U.S. as documented statistically in Chapter One, and ethnographically in Chapter Two, I have come to rely upon Gee's notion of ideologies (1990, 1999, 2004b) as a means of revealing the numerous levels of resistance that late arrival students encounter in American society. Gee defines ideologies as "social theor[ies] which involve generalizations… about the way(s) in which 'goods' are distributed in a society," language being one such "good" (1990, p. 23). According to Gee, the distribution of language 'goods' has historically favored those already holding power and prominence in society, simultaneously perpetuating unequal power relations and normalizing the discourses that justify these imbalances. Gee's theory of ideologies follows in the tradition of Foucault, who similarly characterized discourses as power-knowledge configurations that get enacted in local exchanges that represent larger systems of domination (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Gee, 1999; S. Hall, 1981; J. Ryan, 1991). The theory of ideologies also falls squarely in the field of critical theory, which accepts as its starting point the historically inequitable distribution of power in society and the desire (both expressed and underlying) of those holding power to retain their control and status (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Using a framework of ideologies, a critical theorist is able to examine power dynamics at the level of personal interactions but can also extend analysis through multiple layers of "larger social institutions, such as politics, economics, culture, discourse, gender and race" (Hargreaves, Fernandes, & Thompson, 2003).

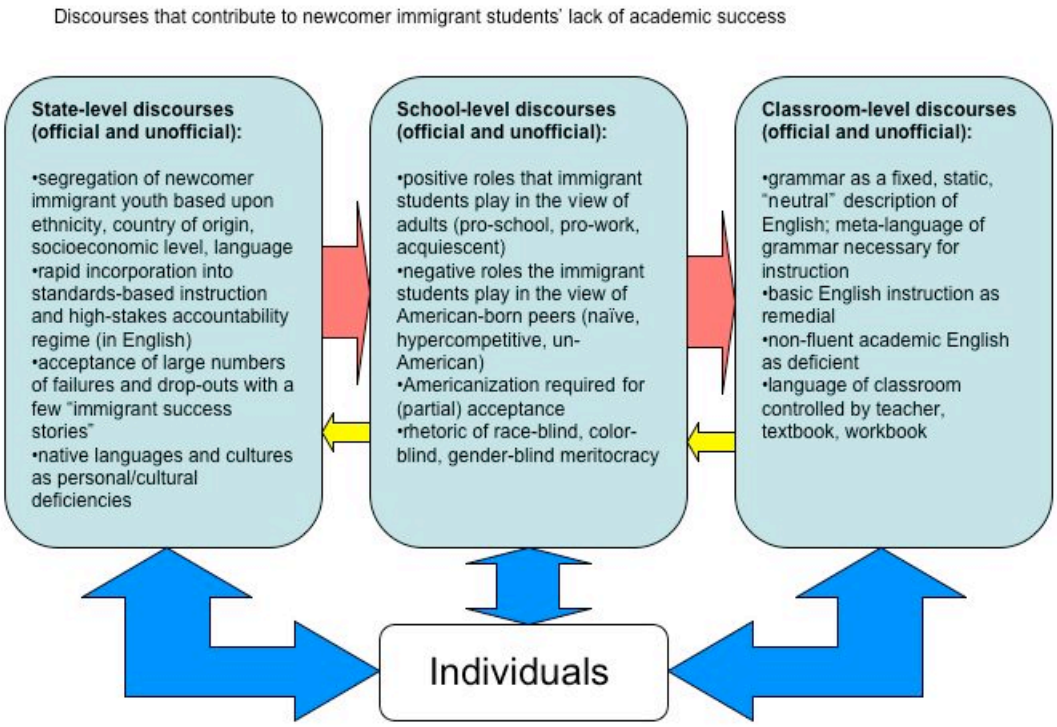
Ideologies are played out and thereby become subject to investigation through discourses, "ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (Gee, 1990, p. 142). Any attempt to unmask ideologies begins with an analysis of these discourses, concentrating on language as the primary source data for analysis (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995; Gebhard, 2004; Gee, 1990, 1999; Rogers *et al.*, 2005; Wodak, 2004; Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

By incorporating Gee's theory of ideologies into this project, the findings of Chapters One and Two can be reconfigured as multiple levels of discourses that operate as networks to the detriment of newcomer students. Figure 4 presents a diagram of this arrangement. Each of the levels of discourse influences the other in a reflexive manner (Gee, 1999), though consistent with the top-down notions of management and control that are *de rigeur* in contemporary public schools (Apple, 2001; Fairclough, 1995; McNeil, 2000; Scheurich, 1997), the weight of official policies and doctrines are more likely to steer activities within classrooms (despite individual misgivings) and to be accepted as "the way things are." Within each level of discourse there are bureaucratic or technocratic statements alongside others that connect on a more personal level; this suggests that enduring and effective (*i.e.,* powerful) networks of discourses connect to ideologies that touch upon individuals' fundamental beliefs.

As socioculturally constructed phenomena, discourses are (re)enacted and (re)created by and through societal actors. In this instance, the reflexive and mutable

nature of discourses vis-à-vis these actors is shown by the lower series of double-headed arrows connecting each level of discourse to individuals in schools.

Figure 4: Discourses that contribute to newcomer immigrant students' lack of academic success



Using this model, one can begin to see how multiple levels of discourse shadow routine classroom activities and language, and how these levels of discourse as a network build off of and reinforce each other. For example, a student's lack of grammatical knowledge of English can be framed by a teacher as a need for remediation [Classroom-

level discourse] (Gehbard, 2004). The interpretation that an ELL's development is substandard is reinforced by an accountability system that relates low test performance to "failure" even when the test is purportedly designed to show progress [State-level discourse] (Black & Valenzuela, 2004). The "strong metaphor" (Lakoff, 2004) of remediation is further bolstered by students' isolation from native English-speaking peers and concentration within all-ESL classes [State-level discourse] (Olsen, 1997). This arrangement requires more explicit language instruction and directed practice because of the scarcity of fluent speakers with whom to communicate [Classroom-level discourse] (Gee, 1990). The metaphor of remediation becomes further reinforced through traditional cycles of grammar instruction that consist of the statement of a rule followed by repetitive exercises and concluding with a test [Classroom-level discourse] (Ellis, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Pennington, 2002); in this cycle, drill and the specter of examination are prescribed as the means to improve discrete elements of language, not the practice of language in more naturalistic contexts (Scarcella, 2003). Lastly, but by no means unimportantly, the framing of late arrival ELLs as remedial students gains power from the students' own skin colors and languages of origin, which fit them into a long history of deficit views of non-white, non-mainstream cultures in this country [State-level discourse] (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). All the while, the project of teaching grammar is portrayed and defended as a politically neutral, race-blind, color-blind activity [School-level discourse and Clasroom-level discourse] (Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Pennington, 2002).

As a poststructuralist, Gee does not ascribe a deterministic quality to societal institutions or to their powers. He contends that language and perceptions of reality act reflexively, that is, they simultaneously create/describe and are created/described by the other. Similarly reflexive are institutions, which are created out of ritualized, or repeated, discourses. Enduring institutions contain forces that "ensure the repetition and ritualization of the situations that contain them" (1999, p. 83). However, while the reflexive property of discourses can and often does act to perpetuate and solidify societal structures and institutions, the mutability of language simultaneously ensures that all discourses remain open to change and are, in fact, in a constant state of change.

It is this perpetual state of flux of language that provides a space for opposition, resistance, and ultimately, innovation within common discourses. Moments where "alternating or competing discourses transform conflict or difference into rich zones" for learning have been characterized as "third" or "hybrid" spaces by theorists (Bettie, 2003; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Gutiérrez *et al*., 2002; Gutiérrez *et al*., 2000; K. D. Hall, 2002; E. Moje *et al*., 2004). I see the emancipatory potential that resides within these hybrid zones of discourse as an important corollary to Gee's discourse theory and as the linchpin of this empirical study.

Within the context of a public high school created to serve late arrival ELLs, I sought to create a discourse space with hybrid potential: a series of email exchanges between second-year students in a secondary newcomer program (Boyson & Short, 2004) and business professionals in the same urban community. The hybrid potential of this activity and its accompanying discourses is characterized as follows (See also Fig. 5):

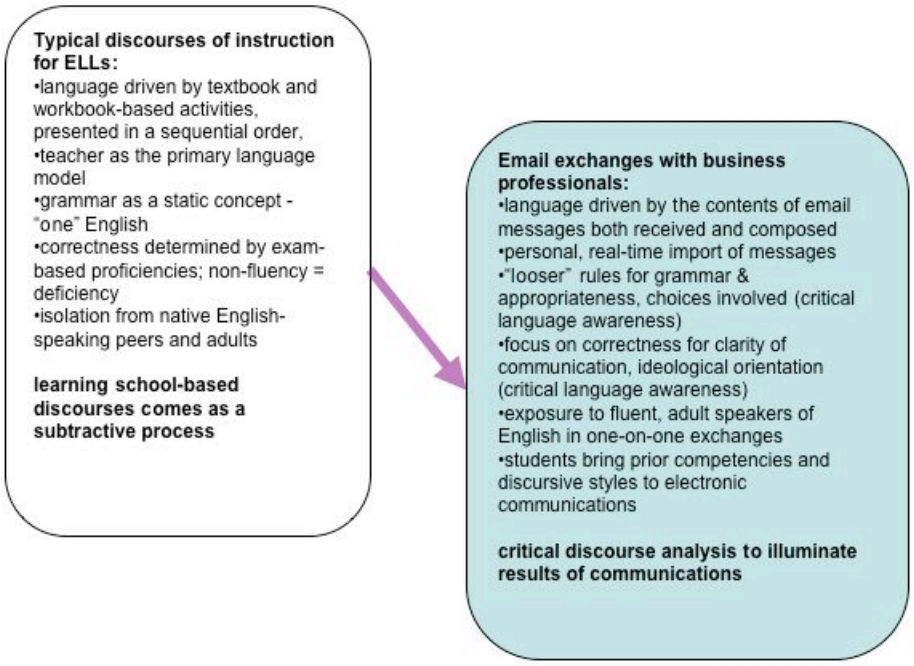
- Many multinational students currently use email as an important link to fellow expatriates in the U.S. as well as to family and friends in their home countries (C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001). In this situation, they used the terrain of email to accomplish two less familiar tasks: establishing direct contact with a member of the professional class of their urban community, thereby eroding some of the physical and psychological isolation they experience from this sector of society (Orfield *et al*., 2003); and attempting written communication in English, not for the sake of a workbook-based exercise, but with some real-world import.
- The actual texts of the business professionals' messages to students were used in the classroom as a vehicle for explicit language instruction. These real-time messages with real-world import for the recipients substituted for the more typical controlled, sequential, and abstract language of textbooks, workbooks, and pedagogical guides. When possible and appropriate, features of these texts were examined for their potential ramifications in an ideology-laced world —in other words, to conduct what Fairclough calls "critical language awareness" (1995).
- Hairston (1981) and Gray and Heuser (2003) have demonstrated that the professional class's tolerance for variation in written English is typically greater and more flexible than the tolerance shown by professional English teachers. Conversations conducted with students about their messages to the business partners focused less on correctness as judged against a codified rule of grammar and more on the clarity of messages and the avoidance of syntax that could sacrifice meaning. As in the analysis of the business partners' messages to

students, when feasible, the students' choices in developing responses to the adults were linked to critical language awareness.

- Email as a medium of communication is viewed by linguists as a discursive hybrid (Grosvenor, 1998).[6] It demonstrates features normally residing within the realm of either oral discourse patterns or written composition. This hybrid status accords well with the students' emerging expressive abilities in English; as second-year students, they typically have a stronger proficiency in oral communication than written, yet the demand for stronger written expression looms large in their final year of exemption from high-stakes exams. Email can help the students begin to transition from predominantly oral discursive styles and develop stronger written expressive skills. Email is also a potentially hybrid territory (in the political sense) in that the virtual world of computer-mediated communication allows for the recreation of self and the presentation of a persona of one's own choosing (Lam, 2000; Thurlow *et al*., 2004).

[6] This use of "hybrid" has a politically neutral tone, unlike the earlier discussion of hybrid discursive spaces. However, I am making the claim that email's linguistic properties allow for a flexibility not present in paper communiqués, making it a ripe terrain for personal expression and innovation.

Figure 5: Email as a potential site for hybrid discourses



Both the theoretical framework and the creation of a space with hybrid potential set the stage for the production of language in a particular context. By subjecting the language produced in these email messages to analysis, I gauged the outcome of these moves.

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The field of critical discourse analysis offers a multitude of methodological approaches that reflect its applications in the varied realms of mass media, political speeches, legislative rulings, educational institutions, high-tech businesses, and home cultures, to name a few (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Gee, 1999; Rogers, 2004; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Though scholars have not arrived at a canonical set of

procedures for critical discourse analysis (and indeed, many resist calls for standardization given the contingencies inherent within all discursive moments), key to all approaches is a well-articulated context, a disciplined analysis of the linguistic structures in use, and a commitment to the political project of social justice (Rogers, 2004; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Drawing guidance from prior critical discourse analyses and from theoretical foundational works, I will now detail the steps I intend to follow in this study.

CONTEXT

Presenting a well-defined context for a critical discourse analysis study is vital given the interplay between language and the situations in which it is produced; in fact, a criticism of critical discourse analysis is that attention becomes so focused on isolated bits of text that the ethnographic details of the context are lost, along with the larger macro-level questions of production, consumption, distribution, and reproduction of language (Rogers *et al*., 2005). In this study, the site was selected in part because of its similarity to high school ESL programs that have been the context for prior ethnographic work (Olsen, 1997; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). On the other hand, it also represents the growing trend in urban areas that have seen increased numbers of late arrival immigrant students to form separate newcomer academies rather than placing students in an ESL program within a comprehensive high school (Boyson & Short, 2004).

The site of my study is the Newcomer High School (NHS), an all-ESL program for late arrival immigrants at the 9th and 10th grade situated on the grounds of a traditional

high school within an 80,000-student district in central Texas. NHS opened in the fall of 2004 on the site of an under-enrolled, "academically unacceptable" comprehensive high school located on the far east edge of the city (TEA, 2005c). Enrollment is determined by a late arrival student's performance on an oral assessment in English conducted by district personnel. A classification of "Beginning" requires enrollment at NHS; a classification of "Intermediate" allows the student to enroll either at NHS or at the home high school; and a classification of "Advanced" requires enrollment at the home high school. Last year, in its third year of operation, NHS served approximately 290 students, the majority of them at the 9th grade level. Over 90% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. (Because of the school's newness, it does not yet have published data on student enrollment, attendance, or academic performance).

Over 70% of the students come from Mexico, with additional students from (in descending order): Honduras, Cuba, El Salvador, Vietnam, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Liberia, Russia, Taiwan, and Korea.

Most NHS classes are housed in the two-story north section of the otherwise low-lying, ranch-style high school complex. Interactions with the adjoining comprehensive high school are limited to the few who have registered for classes offered only by the adjoining school, or within joint extracurricular activities, such as competitive sports.

The school employs a block-schedule format, with classes meeting every other day for a 90-minute period. Students typically take two ESL classes per semester, one focused on the four domains of ESL instruction (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), the other geared specifically toward reading. Class curricula are based primarily

upon the district's instructional guides for ESL instruction as well as the *Visions* textbook series (McCloskey, Stack, O'Sullivan, & Newman, 2004). Students take sheltered English classes in Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics that are designed to modify the grade-level standards and the district-adopted textbooks for the needs of ELLs; the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model has been adopted school-wide as the methodology for achieving these modifications (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000). Elective classes for NES students include Physical Education, Health, Art, Keyboarding, Chorus, Band, Orchestra, Modern Dance, Ballet Folklórico, and a Math Lab for remedial work. A handful of students cross to the neighboring school for classes in advanced content areas such as (regular) English, Chemistry or U.S. History, or for electives that NHS does not offer, such as (American) Football. Class sizes at NHS average in the high teens/low 20s.

NHS students eat lunch in the same cafeteria but at a different time than the adjoining school, and are provided separate transportation to and from their homes. The most significant interactions between the two schools occur during the winter soccer season; the boys' and girls' teams draw their ranks from both student bodies and special transportation is arranged for the NHS students in order for them to remain after school.

Students who enroll at NHS are expected to stay for a two-year course of study, then return to their home campuses in their third year of study (11th grade) in the U.S. Because they will enter their junior year at the home high school, that school will be required to test them with the state exit-level TAKS exams in English (Reading and Writing), Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science, and their scores will count within the

state's rating system for schools and districts, and within federal NCLB ratings. Given the two-fold nature of these high stakes (passing these exams is required for students; their scores count in the school's official ratings), students will most likely be placed in "regular" (designed for native-speakers) content classes with additional ESL and test-prep electives.

The group of students with whom I worked came from a single 10th grade class that met every other day for 90 minutes with Mr. Smith. The previous school year, Mr. Smith's had piloted email communications between select students and local community members. Based upon favorable results, he wished to expand these connections to an entire class, making our collaboration a mutually beneficial exercise. During project-related activities, Mr. Smith deferred to me as the class instructor and served as a facilitator of student understanding and message composition. The classroom has five Internet-connected computers with additional access to a computer lab of 30 machines and two carts of laptops (15 computers on each cart), all with Internet access.

From late August 2006 through the beginning of October 2006, I was a regular participant in Mr. Smith's class, recording observations of class activities and acting as a classroom assistant. During that time, I also secured parent/guardian permissions for student participation, created the email accounts for students, and recruited the adult participants.

The project launched in the first week of October. It began with my sending the adults the first name and email address of the respective student partner, and with the following prompt:

> Take about 20 minutes at your keyboard to tell your story – Who are you and how did you come to be the person you are today? Who or what have been big influences in your life? What are your interests and what are your dreams?
>
> This is a big question, I know. I have left it intentionally wide-open so that your responses come from you, not from a list of categories that I have produced. Your student partner will compose his/her response based in part upon the information you have provided. If you have questions you would like your student partner to answer, please feel free to include them. Please bear in mind that students will not provide a home address, telephone number, or a private email account.
>
> Feel free to attach any photos or links that you think will be helpful in describing your life.

From this point on, we followed an approximate pattern of one week to allow adults to produce a message and one week to compose student responses. Given interruptions such as testing days and school holidays, five cycles of email exchanges were accomplished over the course of the first semester; several students were able to achieve more communications through a more rapid cycling of receive-and-respond, and one pair has carried on communications after the conclusion of the project.

During time allocated in class for the reading and producing of email messages, the teacher and I served primarily as facilitators of student understanding and composition, especially for those who had a more rudimentary grasp of the language. My work with the seven least proficient students to keep up with the two-week receive-and-respond cycles became my chief activity over the duration of the project, and I began to visit individual students in other classes on the days that Mr. Smith's class did not meet. For these students, I worked out exchanges with the teachers; I would either serve as a classroom assistant for the entire class or an individual tutor for the student I was focused on, and upon completion of classwork, I worked with the student in adjoining vacant classroom for the remainder of the class period. Because of the intensive role I played in

these seven students' understandings and compositions, I determined that my voice played too strong a part in their written self-presentations, and their messages were excluded from this study's data set.

Two other students in the class participated in the email exchanges yet their data was excluded from the study. The first was a second-year NHS student originally from Iran. Having failed to find an Iranian-American local business professional who would agree to participate in the project, I arranged a native English-speaking partner for him. The second student, a U.S.-born student of Mexican heritage, returned from a summer trip to Mexico after the project was already under way and was frequently absent from class. I became his partner both for the sake of convenience and in order to acquire some experiential knowledge as an adult participant.

Work sessions typically began with a whole-class mini-lesson focused on a particular objective for that class period. At the outset, these mini-lessons concentrated on the technological aspects of the project – logging into personal accounts, forwarding received messages to my account, and opening new windows for the composition of replies. Early mini-lessons also concentrated on standard protocols for letter production: greetings, conclusions, and addressing questions contained in the previous (adult) communication. Later mini-lessons drew from the results of Hairston's (1981) and Gray and Heuser's (2003) studies on elements of grammar, syntax, and punctuation that were judged as "critical errors" by business professionals. I selected three items from these studies for my focal points—double negatives, subject-verb agreement, and unnecessary repetition. My final mini-lesson was a discussion on strategies for appropriating

language from an adult message. I modeled how to highlight and drag desired words or phrases from the adult message into a student response, and how to use the "cut" and "paste" functions. In this lesson, I suggested that this appropriation was not merely a convenient form of using language to one's own purposes, it was also a subtle form of flattery of the adult partner.

Students in post hoc interviews all reported positive impressions of the project and the teacher, encouraged by the student participation and output, made his final exam an email-based question-and-answer exercise.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

I used purposeful sampling strategies in order to select the students and adults who participated in the email exchanges (Glesne, 1999; Patton, 1990). As Denzin & Lincoln explain, "Many postpositivist, constructionist, and critical theory qualitative researchers employ theoretical, or purposive, and not random, sampling models. They seek out groups, settings, and individuals where and for whom the processes being studied are most likely to occur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this particular case, I initially selected participants employing homogeneous sampling techniques (Patton, 1990; Glesne, 1999).

Based upon teacher and parent approval, I initially invited thirteen 10th grade native-Spanish speaking students of mixed academic performance within a single class to participate in the research project. Of Mr. Smith's six classes, this had the highest percentage of native Spanish speakers. Starting with a pool of students who all speak the same native language (allowing differences for regional and national dialects) permitted

greater facility in conducting discourse analysis of their written language, helping to identify transfers of grammatical, syntactical, and discursive structures or phrases from the native Spanish. My facility in Spanish also permitted classroom-based explication of English language features using the native language to highlight parallels or contrasts between the two languages (Cummins, 1996; Ellis, 2006). The selection of second-year students was based upon the likelihood that they would have more advanced receptive and expressive English abilities than students in their first year of schooling in the United States, and upon the expectation that they would return to their home campuses the following year and receive "regular" English instruction.

For the adult partners, I recruited thirteen English-speaking Latino business professionals who reside within the metropolitan area to participate in the email exchanges. By narrowing the selection to these criteria, I hoped to increase the likelihood that the students and adults would share some "cultural practices" (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003) by virtue of some common heritage features as well as a shared locale. These shared cultural practices would hopefully contribute to connectivity, solidarity, and enthusiasm in their written messages. In order to help ensure a positive and salutary orientation toward the students, I conducted initial face-to-face conversations with the adults, in which I explained the pragmatics of the email exchanges. Moreover, adult participants underwent district-approved "mentor" training, which required an online registration and an orientation session conducted by me. They also agreed to and were cleared through a criminal background check.

Once the partnered communications began, I employed a second round of purposeful case sampling (Patton, 1990) to select six pairs of students and adults for a series of parallel, open-ended structured interviews concerning their impressions of the project and of the partner-respondent's email messages (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Selection of the pairs was based upon initial exchanges that showed signs of "information-rich" communication without extensive guidance from myself or the cooperating teacher (Patton, 1990, p. 169). These interviews, transcribed and coded, further developed the context of the email messages in order to enhance the critical discourse analysis. (The interviews are described more fully in "Data Collection," below.) Of these six dyads, five pairs' communications provided the material for analysis. The adult member of the sixth pair removed himself from the study after the final email exchanges occurred in December but before the face-to-face meeting and post-project interviews occurred.

All participants had their anonymity preserved through the use of pseudonyms and other ethical safeguards as required by the Institutional Review Board of both the University of Texas at Austin and the local school district.

DATA COLLECTION

Critical discourse analysis depends upon spoken or written utterances that can reveal socially-situated identities within socially-situated activities (Gee, 1999). In this research project, the socially-situated activity was a series of email exchanges between Latino late arrival immigrant students and Latino business professionals, and the utterances were the email messages themselves. In all, five-eight exchanges occurred

within each dyad over the period October-December 2006, with a two-week period scheduled for each complete cycle of reception and production. I created student email accounts specifically for this study and had full access to their contents. All email messages were copied and pasted to separate electronic files for use in analysis. For security purposes, the student email accounts were shut down at the conclusion of the study, though with parent or guardian approval, the student received a new email account in which they selected their own password, thus preventing my access of it.

Because effective critical discourse analysis depends upon a constant interplay between discreet bits of language and the ever-shifting, ongoing context of language production (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 1999; Rogers *et al*., 2005), I used other qualitative data-gathering techniques to complement the critical discourse analysis. Given the highly limited context of email messages, I took descriptive field notes during and shortly after class sessions that attempt to capture the settings, the actions, and the visible impressions of the students engaged in the reading and composition of email messages (Glesne, 1999). As an "active-member researcher," I assisted students in deciphering adults' email messages and in constructing their own compositions. An "active-member researcher" is one who "becomes involved with the central activities of the group, sometimes even assuming responsibilities that advance the group" (Angrosino & Pérez, 2000). While this positionality demands examination in its own right (see below), it also required that I include as part of my field notes recordings of my moves in facilitating comprehension and composition as well as the students' responses.

In order to complement both the email texts and the descriptive field notes, I frequently recorded analytic notes outside of class time that attempted to capture preliminary and/or impromptu analyses of events and texts. "Analytic noting is a type of data analysis conducted throughout the research process; its contributions range from problem identification, to question development, to understanding the patterns and themes in your work" (Glesne, 1999, p. 53). These analytic notes also provided the impetus for "critical language awareness" (Fairclough, 1995) instruction when language issues arose that had a particularly poignancy for the discussion of discourse styles and their ramifications. More generally, I used these analytic notes to prepare for and assist my own explication of English language features for students (individuals, small groups, or the entire group) with the intent of benefiting their understanding of the language and aiding their decision-making during the composition process.

Five student-adult dyads completed both a midway and a final semi-structured, open-ended interview. A semi-structured interview provides some starting questions or essential issues to be addressed but allows the conversation to follow threads established by the respondent (Patton, 1990). The intent of these parallel interviews was to gather contextual information that would support and deepen the critical discourse analysis, allowing comparisons between partner's written messages and their spoken thoughts as well as some chronological comparative analysis. The initial interview sought respondents' reactions to the email messages received and composed and their initial impressions of their partners. The second interview repeated the request for reactions to the messages and impressions and addressed themes raised in the first interview for

follow-up reactions (See Appendix B). These interviews were digitally recorded then transcribed, with notes taken as a backup measure as well as a reference point for follow-up questions. Interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and the option to conduct the interview in Spanish was provided to all participants. Member checking occurred by allowing the respondent to review interview transcripts and affirm the accuracy of their statements (Glesne, 1999).

Figure 6 indicates the adult-student dyads along with some biographical information. In order to preserve confidentiality, pseudonyms have been assigned to all subjects and places of origin are indicated as regions, not specific locales.

Figure 6: Table of Participants

Adult Name	Age	Occupation	Place of Origin		Student Name	Age	Country of Origin
María	26	Lawyer / translator	Nuevo Leon, Mexico	paired with	Erica	17	Zacatecas, Mexico
Anne	46	Professor of business admin.	Distrito Federal, Mexico	paired with	Maricruz	17	Guerrero, Mexico
Mateo	32	Mortgage broker	Azuay, Ecuador	paired with	Pablo	17	Tamaulipas, Mexico
Sara	47	Telecommunications executive	Jalisco, Mexico	paired with	Yessica	17	Distrito Federal, Mexico
Diego	34	Television executive	Nuevo Leon, Mexico	paired with	Jesús	17	Coahuila, Mexico

DATA ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis attends to discreet portions of language within a particular sociohistorical context with the aim of providing a multilayered analysis of how the language operates to communicate surface-level messages as well as underlying

dynamics of interpersonal relations, cultural traces, institutional influences, and ultimately, power. As a subset of critical theory, critical discourse analysis attends to how texts function in constructing, reproducing, or transforming social systems relative to economic differentials, race, gender, religion, education, and/or sexual orientation (Rogers *et al.*, 2005). Its emergence as a distinct field can be traced to the late 1980s and early 1990s, when researchers began to bring social reproduction theories to their micro-analyses of written and spoken texts (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995; Gebhard, 2004; Gee, 1990, 1999; Rogers, 2004; Rogers *et al.*, 2005; Wodak, 2004).

As a category within the qualitative research paradigm, the aim of critical discourse analysis is not to "prove" immutable "truths" about the ways that language operates in society or even between individuals. Instead, qualitative research "stress[es] the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.8). I have embraced this interpretivist orientation in an attempt to confront the positivist assumptions inherent in the standardization and accountability movements that dominate both school culture and research about schools today (Apple, 1975, 1986, 2001; Berliner, 2002; Erickson & Gutierrez, 2002; McNeil, 2000).

This version of critical discourse analysis is a poststructuralist method of inquiry – that is, it is not concerned with revealing "how historically and culturally located systems of power/knowledge construct subjects and their worlds" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). Instead, a poststructuralist approach tackles the "slipperiness of social constructs and the language that construct[s] and respresent[s] such constructs" (Rogers *et al.*,

2005). By focusing on the micro-details of human linguistic interactions, critical discourse analysis can attend to both language-in-action and the active use, including acceptance, resistance, and innovation, of social constructs.

In the fall of 2005, Rebecca Rogers *et al.* published a review of literature pertaining to Critical Discourse analysis as it related to formal and informal educational situations (2005). The authors reviewed 46 studies (39 empirical, seven theoretical) that had been published over the period 1980 to 2003. In addition to providing a useful compendium of critical discourse analysis pieces, the authors drew upon these works in order to assess the current state of the discipline of critical discourse analysis as applied to education.

Fairclough's (1995) design of a three-tiered framework has been referenced heavily by educational researchers as their methodological basis though Rogers *et al.* (2005) point out that rarely do the studies address all three levels of the framework or the different kinds of analysis within each level. Fairclough's framework states that any discursive event is ripe for analysis at three different levels: the text, the discursive practice, and the sociocultural practice. At the textual level, Fairclough relies upon the tenets of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics in order to conduct analysis. (Rogers *et al.* (2005) indicate that this is typically the type of analysis that receives the least thorough treatment from researchers working in educational settings.) The discursive level is analyzed by looking at how individuals interpret text, use it for their own needs, modify it, and distribute it for further consumption. The third kind of

analysis, the sociocultural, looks at text on a societal level as an instrument of power within various domains.

Gee (1990, 1999, 2004b), frequently cited by American researchers (Rogers *et al.*, 2005), advocates a more ecumenical approach to critical discourse analysis, distinguishing the Fairclough-defined version as the capital-letter "Critical Discourse analysis" in contrast to his own methods (2004b). He posits that because his discourse analysis involves the unmasking of ideologies, belief systems that perpetuate status-quo dynamics of power in social relations, it is inherently critical (1990). Furthermore, Gee is adamant about not preferring or prescribing one specific method of discourse analysis; instead, he offers "tools of inquiry," interlocking lenses that can be used in an iterative examination of texts. He offers four tools of inquiry:

1. Social languages – "a way of using language so as to enact a particular socially situated identity" (2004b, p. 43)
2. Situated meanings – "meanings that are specific and situated in the actual contexts of their use" (2004b, p. 44)
3. Cultural models – "distributed across and embedded in socioculturally defined groups of people and their texts and practices" (2004b, p. 45)
4. Discourses – "distinctive ways of thinking, being, acting, interacting, believing, knowing, feeling, valuing, dressing, and using one's body… also distinctive ways of using various symbols, images, objects, artifacts, tools, technologies, times, places, and spaces (2004b, p. 46)

Other critical discourse analysis practitioners, befitting critical discourse analysis's status as a critical post-modern, post-structural movement, propose the possibility of grounded theory versions of critical discourse analysis or methodologies that deliberately attempt to depart from European-based models of research design when studying oppressed minorities (Rogers *et al.,* 2005).

Email texts from all participants received an initial, cursory analysis for the primary purpose of aiding the comprehension and production of email messages by the students. In this analysis, I recorded marginal notes that gave contextual information about the composition of individual messages, such as the affect of the student, summaries of conversations, and the sources of assistance received (from peer, adult, dictionary, or online translator). I reflected on student responses to adult questions or themes. For the purposes of instruction, I noted constructions that seemed particularly challenging as well as advances that had been made in written fluency.

Upon conclusion of the email project, beginning in February 2007, the entire corpus of email messages and supporting data underwent a second round of analysis in which I added contextual data from the composition sessions, the face-to-face meetings, and the post hoc interviews. At this point, I determined to narrow the analysis to those subjects who had participated in the pre- and post-project interviews.

The email messages of the five pairs were first reorganized into "lines," units typically smaller than the sentence level, composed of salient pieces of information (Gee, 1999). I followed the method of line division recommended by Susanna Sotillo who, in analyzing asynchronous and synchronous computer-mediated communications of ESL

students, suggested looking beneath a T-unit level of analysis in order to more effectively examine syntactic complexity (2000). A T-unit, as defined by Kellogg Hunt, includes an independent clause and all subordinate or phrasal clauses which attach to it (Hunt, 1965). Like Sotillo, I saw the benefit of looking more closely at subordinate and phrasal clauses in order to observe the variety of clausal uses and whether there would be changes in this variety over the course of the study. Therefore, I determined to insert line breaks with each verbal unit (those that involve an active, passive, imperative, gerund, or infinitive verb form) or prepositional phrase.

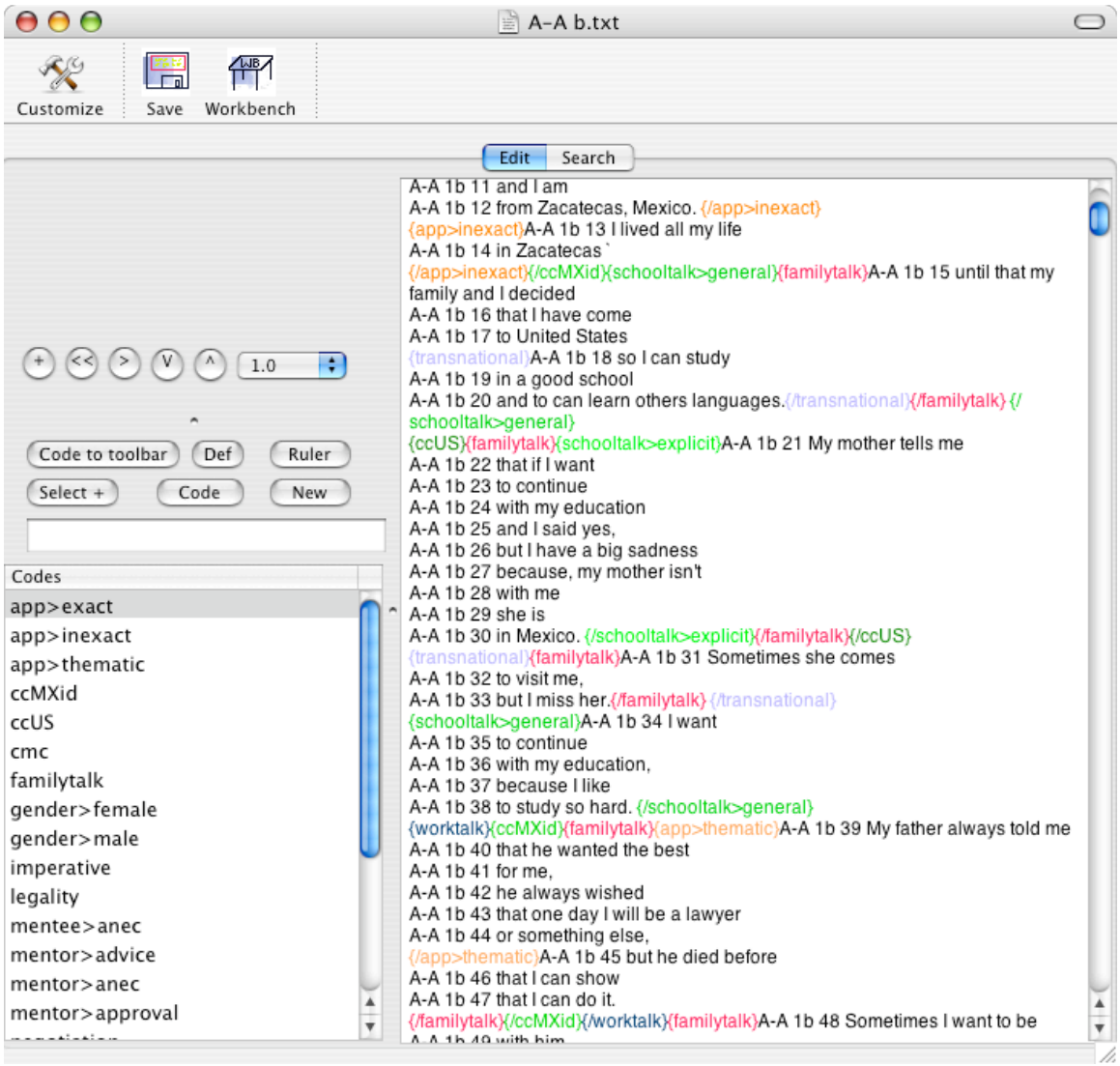
The analysis thereupon proceeded in three phrases. In the first phase, I concentrated on the individual as the unit of analysis. By looking at verbal structures, word choices and collocations, clausal relationships, and knowledge claims, I arrived at initial hypotheses of socially-situated identities and underlying ideological orientations, as well as shifts in socially-situated identity, over the course of the communications (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 1999; Johnstone, 2002; Wodak, 2004). Marginal notes indicated what kinds of identities I was observing and pointed to the evidence in the messages to support the claim. For example, a statement by one adult about reading a novella as a young girl prompted my indicating that there is evidence of a home literacy practice in Spanish, and a pro-Mexican orientation. This is a past-oriented viewpoint, however, given the "I remember..." narrative device she used as well as the statement that she "used to" read novellas. Therefore, I could not conclude that this represents her current thinking about literacy practices or views of her homeland.

In the second phase of analysis, I looked at the messages as dyadic structures, exploring the interplay between the two correspondents. This analysis included examination of surface-level features of language, such as instances where one correspondent was directly addressing the other through questions and answers, imperatives, or threads of conversational topics that were deliberately passed back and forth between the two. I also looked beneath surface-level readings to examine instances of silence, when questions were not answered, imperatives not addressed, and where conversational threads were discontinued. Moreover, I identified instances of language appropriation, when a partner (typically the student, though not always) mirrored the exact language, a close approximation, or a stylistic structure from the other (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). This phase of analysis enhanced the situational nature of identity construction and presentation, and illuminated changes in students' expressive repertoires. At this stage, my coding system was taking shape, as I began to repeat categories such as "school life," "family life," "mentor talk," "knowledge worker," and as I provided pointers from one message to another of instances where solidarity was being built and language appropriation was occurring.

In the third phase of analysis, I coded data with "patterns, themes, and categories" that emerged from the initial readings, always with an eye toward the interplay between text and context (G. W. Ryan & Bernard, 2000). In order to code the data, I imported the reconfigured email messages into TAMS analyzer, an open source product for ethnographic and discourse analysis (http://tamsys.sourceforge.net/) (Weinstein, 2004). Using TAMS analyzer permitted the assembling of like-coded language from across

messages for further confirmation of common attributes and for making more nuanced distinctions among messages. I arrived at 23 codes in all, some such as "Mexican identity" or "familytalk" pointing directly at socially-situated identities, and others, such as "exact appropriation" or "imperative" indicating language work (which of course, also leads to identity). Figure 7 is a screen shot of a portion of text coded in TAMS analyzer.

Figure 7: TAMS analyzer



Once all the email texts were coded, TAMS analyzer permitted assembly of all like-coded fragments together in tables in order to give a holistic view of similarly-coded material, and in order to see instances of appropriation side-by-side with the original statements.

Given the undesirability of writing (or reading) about 23 different codes, and the repetition of particular fragments across multiple codes, I then looked for larger categories that were salient to nearly all the email messages and that subsumed other categories. By looking at the assembled fragments and then back at the original messages, I arrived at a conclusion that much of the adults' communications had a deliberate thrust, a desire to steer students through advice, anecdote, imperative, and approval to action and orientation in their school and society. Calling this intentional language "mentor talk," I situated it within larger discursive strains in society, then looked at how students responded to it. Discussion of this last stage of analysis consumes much of the remainder of this dissertation.

Through all phases of analysis, I continuously moved back and forth between microtextual analysis, the larger bodies of text, and the contexts of text production. "These steps are taken several times, always coming and going between text, ethnography, theories, and analysis. Most importantly, the decisions that are constantly required in the analysis have to be made explicit and justified" (Wodak, 2004, p. 210). In this regard, the descriptive and analytic notes, and the interview transcripts and corresponding notes, were instrumental in performing micro-textual analyses.

Trustworthiness

Credibility for conceptual explanations arrived through discourse analysis was bolstered by several elements within the research design. Gee, not shying from, or seeking to reclaim, the positivist-laced term of "validity" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), offers four essential ingredients of a "valid" discourse analysis:

> 1. Convergence: A discourse analysis is more, rather than less valid… the more the answers to … questions converge in the way they support the analysis or… the more the analysis offers compatible and convincing answers…
> 2. Agreement: …the more other discourse analysts (who accept our basic theoretical assumptions and tools), or other sorts of research (e.g. ethnographic research) tend to support our conclusions.
> 3. Coverage: The analysis is more valid the more it can be applied to related sorts of data. This includes being able to make sense of what has come before and after the situation being analyzed and being able to predict the sorts of things that might happen in related sorts of situations.
> 4. Linguistic details: The analysis is more valid the more it is tightly tied to details of linguistic structure…[T]he analyst is able to argue that the communicative functions being uncovered in the analysis are linked to grammatical devices that manifestly can and do serve these functions, according to the judgments of "native speakers" of the social languages involved and the analyses of linguists.
>
> Gee, 1999, p. 95 (italics removed)

The first ingredient, convergence, depends not only upon the inter-relatedness of the texts in question, but also upon the compatibility between the analysis and the context production; in other words, the analysis needs to be justified based upon the unique situation in which it was created. This form of convergence can also be read as a method of data triangulation, where multiple sources are used to enrich and complexify the data set as well as to bolster analytic conclusions (Glesne, 1999).

The second element, agreement, was achieved through a reckoning of the analytic conclusions with the prior research bases in school-based ethnographies concerning late

arrival ELLs (Bettie, 2003; Olsen, 1997; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999) and in critical discourse analyses conducted in similar schooling contexts (Gebhard, 2004; Gee, 1990; Rogers, 2002).

The third ingredient, coverage, was addressed through comparison with prior analysis of the writing of late arrival ELLs (Valdés, 1996) as well as through discussion of what the research conclusions might portend for the future writing practices of the students involved.

In addition to these attempts at bolstering trustworthiness, several other steps in the design process enhance the strength of the findings. Member checking of the interviews allowed respondents to confirm, deny, or add to elements within the transcripts (Glesne, 1999). Moreover, I solicited a Spanish-speaking colleague with a critical orientation to periodically review my research data, paying particular attention to instances where I made linguistic judgments that rely upon knowledge of Spanish as well as moments in my analysis that revealed sociocultural blinders or inaccuracies.

LIMITATIONS

Having described in the previous sections the steps to strengthen this research proposal, here I wish to discuss some of the potential flaws it contains. Because this is an attempt to examine a hybrid space in discourse patterns, the space itself is rife with uncertainty and the potential to defy assumptions. Given late arrival ELLs' historical lack of success in mainstream schooling situations, I view this hybrid space as a zone of possibility, though it can also make the examination of it tricky.

Email if of itself is a hybrid medium of communication, encompassing a mix of discourse styles, both formal and informal, some belonging more to oral traditions and others to written traditions (Grosvenor, 1998). As a virtual medium, email invites "identity play" and choices in levels of self disclosure (Lam, 2000; Thurlow *et al.*, 2004)—hence the need for extra security precautions in monitoring the email accounts and in screening the adult participants. This flexibility in self-presentation may have led to information that was inconsistent with the actual lives of the correspondents. Adding to this the age, cultural, and linguistic discrepancies between students and the business professionals made critical discourse analysis a complicated affair. The fact that students were relatively new to written communication in English may have constrained their expressive capacities to the point that discourse analysis techniques were not effective tools for the analysis of their messages. In a similar vein, the limiting parameters of the adult email messages (written to late arrival ELL students they had not met, subject to examination in a classroom and by a researcher, conducted over a short-term basis) may have caused the texts to be less free-flowing and more opaque than communication in a more naturalistic setting.

The data was drawn from a three-month period during which the email communications were established, then shut down (formally, though with interest and adult permission they were encouraged to continue informally). This may not have been enough time to establish a healthy flow of communication between adult and student; nevertheless, it is hoped that the data set has yielded interesting results for analysis as well as suggestions for future research pathways.

As with many educational research projects, there is a tendency to consider instructional implications. Here, I must caution that any attempts, especially my own, at generalizing the results of this study must be sharply tempered by the limited time duration of the project and the awareness that this was an investigation of language-in-action, not instruction-in-action. Instruction, as it was explored in this study, was relevant though tangential to the email messages produced by students and adults. Likewise, the analysis of the language is reflexively related to the situation in which it was produced. Thus, prudence is required in discussing how the analysis may be meaningful outside of this unique context.

Another limitation on the study concerns the manner in which participants were selected. The process was purposeful in a number of ways (see "Participant Selection," above) but not much was initially known about the business professional participants apart from their meeting the sampling criteria and establishing their willingness to commit to the project through a face-to-face conversation. The research design designated thirteen partner-pairs with the realization that not all pairs would generate useful data; the five selected for analysis were those that were viewed as robust communications.

PERSONAL INTEREST AND POSITIONALITY

Like critical discourse analysis, my personal interest in this research project occupies multiple levels of meaning in this research project. As the son of an immigrant, I have long been interested in how immigrants make the shift to become first-generation Americans, including what is gained and lost in the process. For much of my adult life, I

have served students as an ESL teacher at all levels (Pre-K to adult) and as a public school administrator (seven years at the elementary level, one at the high school level); when I have not been working directly with students, I have studied education, electing to concentrate on the sociocultural implications of formal schooling for students, especially those who occupy marginal positions. My critical conscience became awakened during a sabbatical from administrative duties, when I began to examine how pervasively the forces of oppression and societal stasis operate in U.S. public schools despite the rhetorics of egalitarianism, multiculturalism, and social mobility (Anderson, 1998; Anzaldúa, 1987; Apple, 1975, 1986, 1990; Bettie, 2003; Bomer & Bomer, 2001; Fry, 2005a, 2005b; Gebhard, 2004; Greene & Winters, 2004; Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a; McIntosh, 1988; McNeil, 2000, 2004; Meier, 2002; Oakes, 2005; Olsen, 1997; Orfield *et al.*, 2003; Scheurich, 1997; Smitherman, 2000; Steele, 1999; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001; E. T. Trueba & Bartolomé, 2000b; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999, 2004b; Wilson, 1987).

My biases lean toward the desire to uncover oppressive acts in public schools (including my own), to receive immigrant students, with or without documents, as fledgling members of U.S. society, and to provide them culturally additive means of acquiring the English language (Valenzuela, 1999). By inviting atypical discourses to take place within a classroom setting and examining them with a critical eye, I wished to see what happens to student language and identity as a result.

TIMELINE

June 2006	➢ Submit IRB requests to university and local school district
September 5, 2006	➢ Present dissertation proposal to committee
September 2006	➢ Select students and obtain approval from parents ➢ Select business professionals and obtain agreements ➢ Establish student email accounts
October 2006 – December 2006	➢ 5-8 exchanges occurred, approximately one every two weeks ➢ Conducted mid-point interviews ➢ Gathered data in the form of email messages, observation notes, analytic notes; perform initial, cursory analysis
January 2007	➢ Informal gathering of students and business professionals; close student email accounts
February 2007	➢ Conducted post-project interviews; ➢ Provided students new email accounts
February 2007 – July 2007	➢ Post-project critical discourse analysis and writeup
August 3, 2007	➢ Dissertation defense

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have presented the framework for the creation of an email exchange between late arrival Latino ELLs and Latino business professionals, along with the methods employed for analysis of the exchanges, including the techniques employed to ensure trustworthiness and the limitations that seemed most apparent. Along the way, I examined my own role as a researcher of a particular orientation examining this unique series of events. Given the multifarious ways in which resistance to immigrant student success in U.S. public schools has been documented and theorized, it stands to reason that an attempt to create a hybrid, potentially emancipatory space for late arrival ELLs

within a public school must proceed with the recognition that the discourses of power foster not innovation, but stasis (Gee, 1999). I hope that a thoroughly explicated research design and implementation invites confidence in the results that follow.

Chapter Four – "Mentor Talk"

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings from a critical discourse analysis of email exchanges between five adult-student pairs over the period October -December 2006. The five pairs were initially selected out of the total fifteen pairs of participants involved in the project because the receptive and expressive English language abilities of the five students were sufficiently developed to allow communications to proceed without extensive assistance from an adult in the classroom. Unlike with many other students, assistance provided was less focused on the translation of words and passages from English to Spanish and vice versa, and more dedicated to the editing of compositions in order to express intended meanings in English. Given the greater degree of independence that these five students had compared to their peers, their written words express a more unfiltered depiction of both their composition abilities and the socially-situated identities they enacted through participation in the project.

Once identified, the five students and their corresponding partners participated in two open-ended interview sessions, one at approximately the mid-point of the project's duration and another after the project had concluded. (A sixth adult-student pair was selected but the adult declined participation in either the culminating face-to-face meeting or the follow-up interview). Transcripts of these interviews entered into the data analysis; though not subjected to the same microanalysis as the email messages, the transcripts helped bolster analytic findings by providing biographic and ethnographic

information, and by ratifying judgments on discursive styles as well as ideological stances (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 1999; Rogers *et al.*, 2005; Wodak, 2004).

The focus of this chapter will be on the language produced by the adult partners in their communications with students. The contents of this chapter therefore address the first of my research questions:

- What socially-situated identities and underlying ideologies are presented by the adults to the students in the course of the email exchanges?

In the course of analysis, numerous commonalities in topic selection and identity presentation emerged within the adult's messages to the students. Here, I focus on one such commonality, the discourses and identities that surround the concept of mentoring. Using Rogers' notion of *discourse alignment* (2002), I demonstrate how a discursive stance as a mentor in the context of this study aligned strongly to wider school- and immigrant-related discourses discussed earlier in this work. Such discourses include the affirmation of a colorblind meritocracy, the notion of progressive societal advancement for hardworking immigrants, the rewards of working within a postindustrial, knowledge-based, globalized economy, and the assumption that formal education confers economic and social benefits. In detailing how the mentor discourse aligns with these broader cultural models and ideological positions, I contend that in most instances, the discourse operates counterproductively as a signifier and in some cases, reinforcer of the sociocultural distances between the adults and the students. Simultaneously, it highlights the marginal position that these students occupy in society, and more immediately, the subordinate power status that they hold in relation to the adults. In an example of

negative case analysis, I also examine how one adult's language did attempt to break down sociocultural distances between her and her partner and foster a mutual identity within a discourse of mentoring (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris, 2005).

The presentation of "mentor talk" occurs in four sections. First, I define "mentor talk" and situate it within local and larger discourses. Then, I identify three prominent themes I identified as constitutive of "mentor talk:" goal-setting, practice of English, and praise-giving. Citing examples that fall within these three categories, I explore how particular instances of language carry traces of ideological orientation, and postulate how these language fragments are intended to exert influence upon the student recipient.

A practical note on the presentation of data: Throughout this chapter, when I select fragments from the email texts for examination, I keep the reference system intact that I used for the analysis. Codes placed at the outset of each line indicate the pair involved in the exchange (the capital letters), the number in the series of exchanges (the first number), whether the adult or student is writing (a or b), and the line number of that email message (the second number). For example, the fragment

M-P 1a 38 I would like

indicates that the adult Mateo is writing to the student Pablo in their first exchange of messages and at the 38th line. A line, as described in the methodology of analysis in Chapter Three, is a verbal or prepositional unit. I provide the reference codes here so as to give the reader a shorthand sense of context, since they recall both individuals involved within the pair, how far along they are in their exchange of messages, and how deep into that particular message the fragment occurs.

"MENTOR TALK"

I entered into this project with the express intent of avoiding calling the adult participants "mentors" or of referring to the email communications as a "mentorship." I wished to preclude an explicitly hierarchical relationship between the participants. Knowing that the conversation would not be aided by visual and audio cues, or by the conversational norms of turn-taking and face preservation (Schiffrin, 1994), I also wanted to forestall a heavy-handed presentation of life lessons and recommendations. Most importantly, I wished to avoid a deficit perspective of the students (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Mentors within the local district are typically assigned to students who have been identified by a counselor, teacher, parent, or administrator as in need of social, emotional, or academic support. In my orientation session with the adults prior to the launching of the project, I emphasized that this experience was to provide students a connection to a society that they had just joined but from which they were largely isolated, and an opportunity to practice English one-on-one with an adult who successfully used English in his/her educational and working lives. In other words, I attempted to paint the deficit as societal, not personal. Through frequently asked by the adults for my expectations of the communications, I attempted to keep my answer as open-ended as possible, encouraging them to retain English as the language of their communication and expressing hope that topics of conversation would naturally arise in the course of the exchanges. Instead of a mentor/mentee relationship, where the assignment has occurred because the mentor possesses something the mentee "needs," be it experience, guidance, or simply an attentive ear, in this case, I attempted to provide

assurance that the connection itself was satisfying a need, and that the conversation should proceed as among equals who shared much in common as bicultural, bilingual residents of the same city. I hoped then that if advice were to be given or an anecdote shared, it would be in response to an expressed need rather than an unsolicited offering.

Despite these attempts to avoid the cultural model of mentoring and its attendant hierarchical relationship, the adult participants quickly assumed a mentoring identity. Mateo was the most explicit in his opening email when he wrote

> M-P 1a 38 I would like
> M-P 1a 39 to share
> M-P 1a 40 with you
> M-P 1a 41 my experiences
> M-P 1a 42 as a professional
> M-P 1a 43 and my goal is
> M-P 1a 44 to let you know
> M-P 1a 45 how important education is
> M-P 1a 46 in your personal development.

All of the adults, though not in such overt terms, adopted the stance of a dispenser of advice, anecdotes, approval, and in several instances, reproval. I conclude that in trying to remain oblique in presenting my expectations for the adults, they quickly came to rely on a cultural model with which most were familiar and which was in alignment with the kind of relationship I was proposing. Also weakening my attempt at forging a relationship of equals was the fact that I had identified them and sought their participation as "successful professionals," adults with college degrees working outside of the field of education. (Mateo embraced this identity as a generic "professional" in his opening message to Pablo). Their registration on the school district's website as an "E-Mentor" in order to begin the required security clearance was another reinforcement of a model identity already in practice, as was the required "Mentor Handbook" which I glossed over

in the orientation but nevertheless left in their possession. One adult partner, Sara, had previously served as a mentor at the elementary, secondary, university levels, and in her workplace, and another, Diego, had mentored minority students in his graduate business school (Interview, November 13, 2006; Interview, December 11, 2006). Finally, the sheer awkwardness of conducting a conversation with an unknown, unseen young person, and waiting two weeks between responses, very likely steered the conversation away from a co-construction of dialogue and toward the dispensation of information.

GOAL-SETTING

Rogers, in a 2002 article, describes how a mother of a sixth-grade student was coerced into accepting a special education identity for her daughter despite strong initial objections through an alignment of her personal discourse and school officials' discourses that placed authority and knowledge at a distant remove, in the unimpeachable realm of scientifically-determined testing measures. She describes this alignment as an "epistemological coherence," an appeal to structures of knowing that have long histories and powerful influence in personal identity formation (Rogers, 2002, p. 154). As the first example of alignment between "mentor talk" and broader societal discourses, the topic of goal-setting and strategizing to reach goals was a constant among all mentors, appearing if not in the text of the emails, then in the interviews. That this topic arose as a constant is not surprising; strategic planning is a mainstay of corporate practices and all of the participants had achieved degrees of success within American corporate structures.

Within a globalizing economy, as markets and companies shift directions with increasing speed and frequency, the notion of an individual as a strategic planner and

thinker, either as a member of a small-group structure, or as a solo "knowledge worker," has become a more widespread phenomenon (Apple, 1996, 2001; Gebhard, 2004; Gee *et al.*, 1996; Reich, 1992; M. M. Suárez-Orosco, 2001). This reflects a reduced level of job security -- if the individual cannot change with the company, the individual must go. It is also indicative of the increasingly migratory nature of work and workplaces. From a critical discourse standpoint, it is a direct product of the emphasis within the theories of "new capitalism" that workers will be more productive and respond more effectively to the needs of the company if measures are taken to bring them to identify personally with corporate *mores*. Once that alignment is secure, the corporation can devolve power structures to individuals, flattening hierarchies so as to allow individuals and teams to act on their knowledge (Gebhard, 2004, 2005; Gee *et al.*, 1996).

Locally, the district's mentor handbook suggests that student mentees are often unskilled in the setting of short- and long-term goals, and a mentor relationship may help them bolster this skill. An outlook that emphasizes planning for future success also meshes neatly with the language of blind meritocracy (those who get ahead do so because they have planned to get ahead) and in particular, with the rhetoric of American immigrant success stories of people who set their sights high and strive constantly to meet them (Gebhard, 2005; Olneck, 2004).

Returning to Mateo's text quoted above, by opening his correspondence with a declaration of goals and self-description as a "professional," he provides clues to a personal identity strongly aligned with a "knowledge worker" ethos. The tying together of personal and professional is further reinforced by the goal, stated within the same

sentence, “to let you know how important education is in your personal development” (M-P 1a 44-47). The connection of “education” writ broadly to “personal development” includes a moral dimension in his exhortation; within Mateo’s first two email messages, trustworthiness, truthfulness, and honesty each receive multiple mentions as personal traits that have gained him traction as a professional as well as virtues he admires and looks for in others. Thus for Mateo, the identity characteristics that give him license to counsel Pablo include clear-eyed strategic thinking, a high value on education as a vehicle for professional advancement and moral development, and trusthworthiness in his social and professional spheres.

In his fourth email, Mateo elaborates on this vision of virtuous success in response to Pablo’s request for assistance in a job search:

M-P 4a 54 Something
M-P 4a 55 that I learn
M-P 4a 56 throughout my career
M-P 4a 57 is
M-P 4a 58 You always have to have a "Game Plan"
M-P 4a 59 that is going
M-P 4a 60 to take you
M-P 4a 61 to your Goal.
M-P 4a 62 If there are skills
M-P 4a 63 that you need to learn
M-P 4a 64 to get there,
M-P 4a 65 start now
M-P 4a 66 making changes
M-P 4a 67 in your life
M-P 4a 68 to acquire those skills.
M-P 4a 69 Success is a measure
M-P 4a 70 of how much
M-P 4a 71 you know and how
M-P 4a 72 you can put your skills
M-P 4a 73 into practice
M-P 4a 74 and be productive.
M-P 4a 75 Most people measure success
M-P 4a 76 with money,
M-P 4a 77 the more money you make
M-P 4a 78 the better you are.

M-P 4a 79 And it is fine
M-P 4a 80 to think this way,
M-P 4a 81 money is a big motivator.
M-P 4a 82 If my GOAL is to have a lot of money,
M-P 4a 83 I need to learn a skill (university, college, trade school).
M-P 4a 84 Once I have the skills
M-P 4a 85 a Great Company would hire me
M-P 4a 86 to do
M-P 4a 87 what I like to do
M-P 4a 88 and be paid for it.
M-P 4a 89 Then I am going
M-P 4a 90 to be proud and happy
M-P 4a 91 because I am not only
M-P 4a 92 making a lot of money,
M-P 4a 93 but I have accomplished my GOAL.

Mateo's emphasis on the word "goal" shifts from a single-capital "G" to capitalizing the entire word, as in a crescendo. Other words that receive capitalization, highlighting their status as key concepts, are "Game Plan" (which also receive quotations, a further setting-off acknowledging its status as a metaphor, not literal speech) and "Great Company." Words emphasized through repetition are "skills" and "money." Connecting these key concepts, a game plan consists of the identification of skills needed to reach a goal. These skills are available through formal, post-secondary education institutions (university, college, trade school) (M-P 4a 83)-- hence Mateo's earlier insistence on the importance of education to "personal development" (M-P 1a 46). Once this educational work has been performed, a business (Great Company) will step in as the agent to hire the skilled individual and pay that individual for something he/she likes to do. This Great Company provides the trigger for several events to occur – for skills to be put into practice, for goals to be fulfilled, for feelings of pride and happiness, and for the making of "a lot of money" (M-P 4a 92). By shifting the agency at the end of his game plan from the individual to the Great Company, Mateo affirms his identity as a postindustrial

"knowledge worker," someone who possess agency in selecting and developing his own skills with the assumption that a higher power will ultimately recognize and reward those efforts.

Corporate munificence is also a theme of Diego's, but in his case, it comes several times as a reward for Diego's persistence in sticking to his strategic plan, even in the face of familial pressure or common sense. Diego opens his email communications explaining that he will present his life story as a "Life Decision Tree" (D-J 1a 56), a "professional interviewing technique" (Interview, December 11, 2006) that focuses on junctures of important personal decisions and their aftermaths. Within this format, he quickly presents a situated identity that includes academic competitiveness and drive for societally-sanctioned success:

> D-J 1a 86 · Sciences vs. Arts in High School:
> D-J 1a 87 I picked Physics, Math and Industrial Design.
> D-J 1a 88 Why?
> D-J 1a 89 I didn't know
> D-J 1a 90 what I wanted
> D-J 1a 91 so I picked the hardest
> D-J 1a 92 to do.
> D-J 1a 93 I figured
> D-J 1a 94 I would be better prepared that way.
>
> D-J 1a 95 · Tec vs. MIT
> D-J 1a 96 for College:
> D-J 1a 97 I picked Tec de Monterrey.
> D-J 1a 98 Why?
> D-J 1a 99 Because MIT would not take me.
> D-J 1a 100 My first major failure - two
> D-J 1a 101 of my classmates
> D-J 1a 102 went to MIT.
> D-J 1a 103 MIT is a really, really famous school
> D-J 1a 104 in Boston, Massachusetts
> D-J 1a 105 where they invented a lot
> D-J 1a 106 of the things
> D-J 1a 107 we use today
> D-J 1a 108 like multimedia
> D-J 1a 109 for example!!!

After graduation from a prestigious university in Mexico, Diego moved to the U.S. to seek employment in management consulting firms but had only secured temporary work. In a holiday visit home to Mexico, his family tried to convince him to stay. He refused and went back to the U.S. Soon after:

> D-J 1a 180 finally Deloitte and Touche (a consulting company specialized
> D-J 1a 181 in systems for large companies)
> D-J 1a 182 interviews me
> D-J 1a 183 in Philadelphia
> D-J 1a 184 and makes me an offer
> D-J 1a 185 for their newly-acquired Mexico City office.
> D-J 1a 186 I would have a higher salary
> D-J 1a 187 than my colleagues
> D-J 1a 188 from school working there
> D-J 1a 189 and they would pay my MBA
> D-J 1a 190 after two years.

Here, as a result of insisting on his plan to remain in the U.S., Diego receives an offer loaded with power implications that confirm his initial conviction: a return to Mexico as part of a corporate acquisition, a heftier salary than his classmates, and a return strategy to the US that implied further education and corresponding advancement within the corporate world. Resisting these short-term attractions, Diego continues to hold firm to his desire to remain in the U.S. and

> D-J 1a 206 Shortly after this,
> D-J 1a 207 I received three offers - two
> D-J 1a 208 in the US (one
> D-J 1a 209 in Healthcare and one
> D-J 1a 210 in consulting) and one
> D-J 1a 211 in London
> D-J 1a 212 for an insurance company.

His insistence on a particular goal has resulted in the bounty of three offers from corporations. Moreover, like Mateo's Great Company that potentially "would hire" the skilled worker to ply his/her trade, the corporate language of the job "offer" has an air of

munificence, a provision based upon largesse rather than upon the employee's ability to provide labor and generate profit for the firm.

Loyalty to a large American corporation led to another kind of benefit for Diego. When a friend leaves to open a consulting firm in Thailand, Diego visits and becomes intrigued by the idea of living overseas but fears that a small startup firm's collapse may make re-entry into the U.S. corporate world difficult.

D-J 1a 251 I knew
D-J 1a 252 I needed a project abroad.
D-J 1a 253 I fought very hard
D-J 1a 254 to convince my managers
D-J 1a 255 but 2 months later
D-J 1a 256 I got shipped off
D-J 1a 257 to Brazil
D-J 1a 258 and had my Thailand
D-J 1a 259 without leaving the big stable consulting firm
D-J 1a 260 I worked for.

Here, as in the situations previously discussed, Diego expresses autonomy in advocating for a change of workplace. Interestingly, he frames his desire as "need" for a "project abroad," an existential *wanderlust* translated into a workplace term that implies a temporary stay of residence. Ultimately, Diego's advocacy does not result in quite what he had desired. He becomes a pawn of the corporation and gets "shipped off" not to Thailand, but to Brazil. Diego is content with the decision because he retains some of his initial goal and sense of autonomy-- he can "have *his* Thailand" (D-J 1a 258), albeit in Brazil (my emphasis). This satisfaction is due perhaps to an alignment of perspective between the corporation and the individual which sees both nations as interchangeable Third World countries with quickly expanding global market presence more than as

countries with vastly different cultural perspectives at opposite ends of the globe. The huge corporation provides Diego a final benefit in this transnational move; this time, it is a sense of stability, even in the midst of potentially volatile Third World markets.

The exhortations of these two adults to plan strategically for success and to place faith in corporate structures have presumably served them well in their own pursuits of economic and social advancement. However, they are based upon presumptions that do not align well with the students' current sociocultural realities. The primary social superstructure that the students have experienced directly thus far in this country has been the public school system, which has not proven an effective vehicle for advancement of lower-income minority students, particularly those in the category of English Language Learner (Bettie, 2003; Gebhard, 2004; Olsen, 1997; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001; E. T. Trueba & Bartolomé, 2000b; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999, 2004). This is especially true when a rhetoric of meritocracy is employed to levy judgments on students' academic potential (Gebhard, 2004; Harklau, 1994; Olsen, 1997). Notwithstanding students' own "immigrant optimism" and their appreciation for educational opportunities not available in their home countries, they face many more hidden barriers than clearly defined pathways in attempts to strategize their own advancements in American society (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999).

Secondly, looking beyond school life, the adults' recommendations for advancement are premised on a legal status that has allowed them to be embraced by corporate institutions. Mateo is employable in the U.S. by virtue of his marriage to an American-born wife, and Ramsey inherited his citizenship from an American father.

They both have a freedom of movement and selectivity currently denied to the students. Both of their student partners have obtained work in this country, but in a shadow economy where they have already been positioned as invisible employees earning sub-minimum wages. As long as their undocumented status remains in place, they cannot hold the hope that at the terminus of their schooling lives, the business community will welcome them as "knowledge workers" in a postindustrial economy. The potential of finding a corporate employer in this country that will reward them for their intellectual productivity remains, for the time being, something of a lark.

PRACTICING ENGLISH

In comparison to the future-focused goal-setting examples of the two male adults, the three female adults all remained closer to the immediate present of their partners, each of them discussing the goal of improving English. Anne, the partner of Maricruz, stuck to generalities in discussing how to achieve increased facility in English, recommending practice as the surefire method of improvement:

> A-M 2a 22 as you continue
> A-M 2a 23 to practice,
> A-M 2a 24 your English will continue
> A-M 2a 25 to improve.
>
> A-M 3a 17 As you continue
> A-M 3a 18 to practice
> A-M 3a 19 speaking
> A-M 3a 20 and writing
> A-M 3a 21 you will get better each day.

This blind faith in the effects of "practice" has some merit, of course, but by not delving into details of what constitutes effective practice, it falls short of practicable advice. Such a generality also slides neatly into the paradigm of a neutral meritocracy. This can best

be observed by looking at the converse of her statement, "a lack of practice." Students who do not practice do not typically improve their performance, so poor performance can be attributed to a personal deficiency of drive, initiative, perseverance, or intelligence. The deficit therefore resides within the student, not the sociocultural milieu which ostensibly has offered the possibility of practice (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). What does not receive mention in this conclusion is either the types of practice that are offered to students or whether those practices are indeed effective rehearsals of socioculturally valued skills. Major premises of this dissertation are that the practices offered to newcomer ELLs in public secondary schools are frequently not well-correlated to useful discursive work in the larger society, and that both within and outside of the school setting, these students are isolated to an extraordinary degree such that authentic practice of English-language skills is seldom asked or required. Whereas alignment exists between the "mentor talk" of practice and the discourse of American meritocracy, the lived experiences of newcomer ELLs call into question the validity of both the mentor and the meritocratic discourses.

The adult partner Sara, in comparison to the adult Anne and in response to her partner Yessica's stated desire to improve her English, had more pointed recommendations based upon personal experiences. Like the male mentors, she also projects ahead to the workplace, and details how dedication to the short-term goal of English acquisition had a monetary and personal payoff later on. Sara breaks down the "mentor talk" of practice into concrete actions taken to address challenges she had faced as a novice English student. She thus brings a more nuanced perspective to the "mentor

talk" of practice. She begins by congratulating Yessica on identifying the goal and continues by inferring an obstacle not mentioned by Yessica but raised in my orientation with all the adult partners:

S-Y 2a 05 I am very glad
S-Y 2a 06 to know
S-Y 2a 07 that you want to learn English.
S-Y 2a 08 I know
S-Y 2a 09 it is difficult
S-Y 2a 10 to learn a new language,
S-Y 2a 11 especially when you go home
S-Y 2a 12 and everyone speaks Spanish.

The identification of this obstacle sets up a series of strategies that Sara adopted to aid her language acquisition. There is a pattern to the presentation of strategies: preceding each move that Sara made is an obstacle that had to be overcome in the process. This pattern highlights her earlier statement about the difficulty of learning English; it also paints a picture of perseverance in the face of adversity (like Diego), and a single-minded pursuit of a goal (like Mateo). In presenting Sara's discursive style, I rely on a finding of Gee (1999), who discerned rhythmic stanzas in an oral presentation of a young storyteller. I break Sara's text into four different stanzas, three obstacle-strategy pairs, and a final, direct address to her partner Yessica.

Stanza One
S-Y 2a 13 I remember
S-Y 2a 14 that when I was learning English,
S-Y 2a 15 I would get a head ache
S-Y 2a 16 from concentrating so much
S-Y 2a 17 on what my English teachers were saying.
S-Y 2a 18 I found
S-Y 2a 19 that watching television
S-Y 2a 20 in English
S-Y 2a 21 was very helpful.
S-Y 2a 22 In fact,
S-Y 2a 23 children's programs

S-Y 2a 24 like Sesame Street
S-Y 2a 25 were my favorites
S-Y 2a 26 because they showed the words
S-Y 2a 27 on the screen
S-Y 2a 28 and how to pronounce them.

In this first remembrance, the classroom is (ironically) the setting for the obstacle, the headache that results from trying to capture the oral language of her teachers. As a contrast, Sara finds at home a technology that provides multimodal forms of input (video, audio, and text), gears the complexity of content toward a younger audience, and without the teacher's gaze or the expected public performance of the classroom setting, allows Sara to choose her level of engagement.

Sara provides no further explanation of what Sesame Street is or how to access it (what times it appears, on what channels). This may seem obvious to someone raised in this country, or to a parent of an American-born child, but to a teenager recently arrived in the United States, without more detailed information the reference stands a reasonable chance of being incomprehensible.

Stanza Two

S-Y 2a 29 My friends used to make fun of me
S-Y 2a 30 because I checked children's books
S-Y 2a 31 from the library every week.
S-Y 2a 32 Seeing the picture and the words
S-Y 2a 33 on these books
S-Y 2a 34 helped me
S-Y 2a 35 to learn new words.

This second remembrance positions (again, ironically) friends as the primary obstacle, and reinforces the strategy of looking for materials skewed toward a younger audience. Again, Sara has identified a multi-modal method of learning, this time combining text and graphic images. Like the Sesame Street reference, this strategy requires several prior

steps to obtain full comprehension – the knowledge that she is likely talking about a public library, as opposed to Yessica's high school library, which doggedly avoids books that look too childish, and that a library card is required in order to check out books. Students at NHS who have younger siblings sometimes take advantage of their school reading materials but Yessica is the youngest in her family, so the pursuit of children's literature will have to take place outside of public school channels.

Stanza Three

S-Y 2a 36 I remember that
S-Y 2a 37 even if I was afraid
S-Y 2a 38 of making mistakes,
S-Y 2a 39 I practiced English
S-Y 2a 40 with everyone.
S-Y 2a 41 One time, in a restaurant
S-Y 2a 42 I called a trey "trash".
S-Y 2a 43 The waitress laughed at me
S-Y 2a 44 and my face turned red,
S-Y 2a 45 but I never forgot the difference
S-Y 2a 46 between trey and trash!

In this third remembrance, Sara confronts the internal obstacle of fear, providing an anecdote of how a public embarrassment actually helped to solidify her knowledge of English, thereby validating her resolve to practice "with everyone" (S-Y 2a 40). Unlike the other two strategies, which were solitary endeavors pursued in the shelter of the home, here she is venturing out into the English-speaking world and exposing herself to potential psychological blows. As Sara recalled in her first interview, her initial forays into Anglophone society caused her more "hurt" than she lets on here, but she emerged from the experiences more confident in her abilities (Interview, November 13, 2006). She became aware that her bilingualism was an asset to her in the workplace; seen as a

competitive edge by monolingual co-workers, it acted as a threat to some, prompting a backlash of critiques of her English.

Having delivered information about a seminal moment in her development as a English learner, one laden with a mixed bag of emotions – immediate embarrassment, coupled with a deeper pain inflicted by co-workers, both of which yield to a later triumphalism and vindication – Sara turns her gaze to her partner in the conversation, seeking a solidarity-building connection.

Stanza Four

S-Y 2a 47 I would like to know
S-Y 2a 48 if you have had something
S-Y 2a 49 like this
S-Y 2a 50 happen to you?

Yessica's response in the subsequent email probably fell short of the mark that Sara had desired, expressing simply, "Thank you for your email, it's very beautiful for me, bacause you understand the dificult to me that is to learn \English" (S-Y 2b 07-14). While Yessica did not respond in kind with a specific language experience in her response, she did relate a family conflict before her birth that continued to have resonance within her family. Sara found this account unusual for its intimacy (Interview, November 11, 2006). It may have been the case that Yessica, relatively new to the country and not exposed to much English outside of school, had no similar moment to share, so she offered the family anecdote as a response to Sara's query.

Continuing the thread of the difficulty of English, in her next email Sara brings up another challenge to learning the language, this time less centered on her experiences and residing more within the language itself:

S-Y 3a 10 Have you noticed
S-Y 3a 11 that every letter in Spanish
S-Y 3a 12 is pronounced the same way (phonetic)?
S-Y 3a 13 But in English,
S-Y 3a 14 each letter has two or more pronunciations!
S-Y 3a 15 This makes it very difficult
S-Y 3a 16 to know
S-Y 3a 17 how to pronounce a word
S-Y 3a 18 just by reading it.
S-Y 3a 19 Even people
S-Y 3a 20 who were born
S-Y 3a 21 in the United States
S-Y 3a 22 ask you
S-Y 3a 23 how
S-Y 3a 24 to spell your last name or the name
S-Y 3a 25 of a street
S-Y 3a 26 because English sounds differently
S-Y 3a 27 from the way it is written.
S-Y 3a 28 But, I promise you,
S-Y 3a 29 if you keep practicing English,
S-Y 3a 30 you will learn it
S-Y 3a 31 and then you will be more special
S-Y 3a 32 because you will speak, write and read TWO languages.
S-Y 3a 33 The first job
S-Y 3a 34 I had here
S-Y 3a 35 in the US,
S-Y 3a 36 was a job
S-Y 3a 37 that required English and Spanish.
S-Y 3a 38 I was proud
S-Y 3a 39 to get this job
S-Y 3a 40 to support my family.

In this passage, Sara goes beyond the techniques she mentioned previously to detail a difficulty with the language that the ability to read cannot address. She generalizes a statement about many letter-sounds in the English alphabet to all letters of the alphabet, making a complex phonics system more readily understood to a novice. She extends the difficulty to "even" native speakers, "even" in such quotidian affairs as a last name or a street address (S-Y 3a 19). The detail Sara provides in lines 19-27 could be her attempt to adjust for Yessica's limited comprehension of English. Unlike a perspective that attributes lack of fluency to an individual shortcoming (lack of ability or practice), Sara

takes pains to acknowledge the complexity of the task at hand as an issue of the language, not a failing of either first- or second-language speakers attempting to use the language. I also read its pointed description as a rejoinder to those U.S.-born who made her feel "dumb" as she was first acquiring the language (Interview, November 13, 2006).

To overcome this challenge of language, Sara offers one response, "to keep practicing" (S-Y 3a 29) but unlike Anne, who does not describe what "practice" entails, in the previous email Sara had provided several concrete examples of practice threaded together by a single, overarching goal-- namely, a continuing pursuit of English, within school and without, all in the face of resistance. Following this pathway of practice results in the guaranteed outcome of learning the language and becoming "more special" in the process.

Though elsewhere Sara refers to the "special" quality of being able to move comfortably in two or more societies (Interview, November 13, 2006), here "specialness" refers specifically to having a leg up in terms of employability. This is revealed in the next sentence, where she obtained a job that specifically "required" her bilingual skills (S-Y 3a 37). This is the only instance in the mentor communications where an adult refers specifically to the market value of Spanish. Diego states that he has chosen his current profession because he likes to be "close to the Hispanic community" (D-J 1a 277-278), and María mentions that she is writing curriculum in Spanish but attributes her hiring to having a Bachelor's degree (in law) (M-E 144-148). Anne explains her choice in profession as one that "allowed" her to speak multiple languages as a kind of fringe benefit (A-M 1a 102).

Though I had framed for the participants the practice and use of English as a primary objective of these email exchanges, I nevertheless find it notable that only one adult mentioned Spanish as an asset in the workplace, and that none encouraged a continued pursuit of Spanish literacy as a practical academic goal. At least three of the five adults use Spanish daily as an integral factor in their working lives. Their silence about the use of Spanish compared to the recurring emphasis on the study of English as part of a more general encouragement to continue formal studies speaks to the hegemonic position of English in the marketplace, even in a region where Latinos comprise the majority populace. It lends credence to an educational stance that relegates the native language to a background status for newcomer ELLs, all but ensuring a subtractive model of language acquisition, where fluency in the native language yields to the more valued proficiency in a commerce-friendly English (Cummins, 1996; Smitherman, 2000; Soto, 1997; Trujillo, 1998; Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). I implicate myself as complicit in this subtractive mindset because of the parameters I set for this study, which ruled out conversation between native Spanish-speaking partners. These parameters demonstrate my acceptance of a premise that for newcomer ELLs, a finite time remains available to them to acquire English within formal schooling structures, and that their native tongues play a secondary role in the language acquisition process. I have, to that extent, accepted a *realpolitik* view of the hegemonic force of English, particularly as it relates to students' marketplace futures, and have tried to accommodate a school-based program to match that view. In stating this, I simultaneously declare my limitations as a critical theorist and actor.

Turning back to "mentor talk," the fifth mentor, María, employed "mentor talk" in similar ways as Sara, grounding her recommendations in concrete examples of benefits conferred and obstacles encountered. Rather than speak of education as an abstract good, she focuses on the pursuit of a bachelor's degree as an important target no matter the country of its origin (M-E 2a 63), citing her own employment in the U.S. as a direct result of her degree from Mexico (M-E 1a 147). She uses her own challenges with English to put forth a message about persistence and the necessity of errors in the learning process:

M-E 3a 73 My English is not perfect either
M-E 3a 74 and a lot
M-E 3a 75 of times
M-E 3a 76 I make mistakes
M-E 3a 77 (especially in my verbs).
M-E 3a 78 But mistakes are good
M-E 3a 79 and by making mistakes
M-E 3a 80 you get better every day.
M-E 3a 81 It is
M-E 3a 82 like baking a cake.
M-E 3a 83 Maybe you will burn it the first time,
M-E 3a 84 and maybe the second,
M-E 3a 85 but at the end
M-E 3a 86 you will get a delicious cake.
M-E 3a 87 That is
M-E 3a 88 how life works,
M-E 3a 89 everybody learns
M-E 3a 90 from their mistakes,
M-E 3a 91 don't every forget that.

In order to convey her point, she uses three forms of emphasis that also provide multiple entry points to understanding. First, she generalizes from mistakes in verbs to mistakes in everyday life (lines 78-80). Second, she selects a metaphor that has a high probability of connecting to a home cultural practice (lines 81-86). In these first two parts, by placing Erica in the subject position ("you"), María positions her as the agent of her own improvement (Johnstone, 2002). In the third part (lines 87-90), María pulls out of the metaphor to generalize once again, this time normalizing learning from errors as an

essential human trait. Lastly (line 91), she drives home her message with an imperative not to "forget" (M-E 3a 91).

PRAISE

All three of the female adults included as part of their "mentor talk" evaluations of their partners' linguistic performances. Anne, initially vague in her praise, at the end expressed more overt and specific satisfaction with Maricruz's writing:

A-M 3a 09 You seem
A-M 3a 10 be
A-M 3a 11 doing very well
A-M 3a 12 in learning English-

A-M 5a 04 What a wonderful email you sent me,
A-M 5a 05 with so much information
A-M 5a 06 about you and your life,
A-M 5a 07 thank you!
A-M 5a 08 Your command
A-M 5a 09 of the English language
A-M 5a 10 and your writing skills have improved so much
A-M 5a 11 since you sent me your first email.
A-M 5a 12 I am so proud
A-M 5a 13 of you!

She divides the latter praise into two parts, one pertaining to the message's informative aspect and the other related to the grammaticality of the message.

Sara's initial praise is somewhat halfhearted, reflecting her disappointment with two prior, brief messages (Interview, November 13, 2006):

S-Y 3a 04 I enjoyed reading your letter.
S-Y 3a 05 I like the fact
S-Y 3a 06 that you wrote more this time. (smiley face emoticon)

Later on, like Anne, she notes improvement by commenting upon the effect of Yessica's language upon her:

S-Y 5a 40 Your English is very good!
S-Y 5a 41 Also, your writing is so good
S-Y 5a 42 that when I was reading your letter,

S-Y 5a 43 I imagined you and your family
S-Y 5a 44 at home
S-Y 5a 45 enjoying the time
S-Y 5a 46 you spent together.
S-Y 5a 47 When I read
S-Y 5a 48 what you wrote
S-Y 5a 49 about the food,
S-Y 5a 50 I could smell the delicious Shrimp
S-Y 5a 51 with garlic!

In this praise, Sara's language signifies that Yessica's language production has advanced beyond the merely informative to have a performative function, the successful presentation of sensory images that resonate with Sara. The solidarity Yessica has built with Sara is in turn recognized, then reflected back to Yessica in the form of praise, thus amplifying the solidarity effect (Austin, 1999).

In these instances of praise, the evaluative stance of the adult remains clear; the adult continues to maintain an evaluative distance in attempting to bolster the student's sense of confidence and to promote further production. Neither adult sees herself as a more dialogically-oriented co-constructor of the email messages, but as a recipient of them. Their hierarchy in this adult-student exchange remains clear. (Incidentally, the two male adults' silence in bestowing praise also constitutes a kind of distance, perhaps a more dramatic form than what is seen in the women's messages.)

In contrast, María's messages of praise work to dissolve boundaries between the partners and present the two correspondents as collaborators in Erica's improved production:

M-E 3a 54 Changing the subject now,
M-E 3a 55 I want
M-E 3a 56 to tell you
M-E 3a 57 that I am very proud
M-E 3a 58 of you.
M-E 3a 59 It must have been very hard

M-E 3a 60 to come
M-E 3a 61 to this country
M-E 3a 62 knowing little English,
M-E 3a 63 but you have managed it pretty good
M-E 3a 64 and you are doing great.
...
M-E 3a 69 It is amazing
M-E 3a 70 how well we have been able
M-E 3a 71 to communicate,
M-E 3a 72 isn't?

Like Anne, María expresses pride but then takes the additional step of recognizing some of the many challenges that have faced Erica in this path to the U.S. and the quest to acquire English. She acknowledges Erica's role of "manager" (M-E 3a 63) of her own pathway, bumping up her evaluation from "pretty good" to "great" (M-E 3a 63-64). In lines 69-72, María presents the communication as a mutual activity and by phrasing the evaluation as a question, invites Erica to reach a similarly optimistic conclusion about their joint success thus far.

In the next email, like Anne and Sara, María expresses appreciation for the informative aspects of Erica's writing but again, the analytic stance is subsumed by a stronger sense of mutual identification:

M-E 4a 30 In your last email
M-E 4a 31 you asked me
M-E 4a 32 if I wanted
M-E 4a 33 to be your friend
M-E 4a 34 and I think
M-E 4a 35 you don't need
M-E 4a 36 to ask me that
M-E 4a 37 since I consider you my friend already.
M-E 4a 38 I am beginning
M-E 4a 39 to know you better
M-E 4a 40 every time you write
M-E 4a 41 and that is very fun and exciting.

The value in Erica's writing is not in the picture that she depicts of her life but in the person that she presents, her socially-situated identity. In these words, Erica finds affirmation of both her writing and of her self. Erica's naive question of whether María wants to be her friend is treated respectfully as a non-issue, given the "fun" and "excitement" that María has experienced thus far by virtue of their co-communications. María's delight transcends the pride of an evaluator to encompass the enjoyment of participating in a joint dialogic project. In these words, María expresses a profound human joy in communication with another.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I examined a key commonality among all the adults' email communications, the embracing of a mentor identity, and tied that identity and its corresponding discourse to larger societal discourses that ratify the ideas of a color-blind meritocracy, a strong work ethic, goal-setting and strategic planning, a benevolent corporate superstructure for postindustrial "knowledge workers," dedication to formal educational systems, and the necessity of acquiring English in American society. These discourses hold powerful sway in the continuation of a stratified society, one that normalizes minority immigrant students' positions as the latest members of the American economic underclass. Despite the overall arc of "mentor talk," I also depicted some glimmers of emancipatory work in one adult's communications, as she sought a less hierarchical relationship with her partner and a mutual pursuit of academic achievement. How this exhortative "mentor talk" matches up with actual lived experiences and socially-situated identities of the student participants is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Five - "Mentor talk" & Alignment with Student Identities

INTRODUCTION

In addressing the second and third of my research questions[7], I now turn to the student responses to "mentor talk." I once again employ the term "alignment," but I have nuanced it with a borrowing from Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1999; Schiffrin, 1994). I utilize three categories of alignment: *felicitous, partial, and infelicitous*. I borrow the term "felicitous" from Speech Act Theory because of the theory's emphasis on the performative aspect of language, particularly oral discourse (Austin, 1999). The performative view of language seemed particularly appropriate for me in isolating and analyzing the effects of the "mentor" aspects of the adults' language because of their intent to have their words "work on" the student respondents, *i.e.,* lead them toward a particular present point of view or future orientation. This discourse of "mentor talk" stands in contrast to other elements of their email compositions that are less didactic in tone and more akin to lighthearted chatter or banter. Though these other segments of their messages have performative functions as well, chief among them the establishment or deepening of solidarity, the language outside of "mentor talk" tends not to be conscientiously geared toward shaping a respondents' point of view, nor does it contain

[7] For the sake of convenience, they are:

- How do students receive and respond to these socially-situated identities?
- How does student language change over the course of the email exchanges?

the discourse(s) associated with a particular (and common) cultural model, as does the role of mentor.

A designation of felicitous alignment indicates that the student received the adult's words largely as the adult intended, and that the responses from the student continue the discursive trajectory initiated by the adult. By extension, it implies a high degree of commonality within their two socially-situated identities, including projections of the student's future within U.S. culture. Partial alignment is achieved when there is evidence to suggest that some of the adult's "mentor talk" has hit home but in other instances, there is resistance to a mentor's recommended identity orientation. This resistance could be a conscious, deliberate move on the part of the student, or it may result from other constraints, such as misunderstanding or socioculturally-generated obstacles. An infelicitous alignment indicates that the student assumes an identity that by and large resists or ignores "mentor talk," preferring to take the conversation in another direction.

In support of my claims for these various levels of alignment, I present instances of Bakhtinian language appropriation, moments where students have adopted the words or themes of the adults and put them to their own uses (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986; Prior, 2001). Laying out his theory of appropriation, in words that seem particularly suited to the responses to "mentor talk," Bakhtin writes

> All words have a "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions...

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention.
>
> M.M. Bakthin, 1981, p. 293

In some cases, words have been appropriated directly, perhaps even cut-and-pasted into student responses. Other instances demonstrate a more freeform borrowing of the adult's language or stylistic devices. I find these moments of appropriation particularly compelling, for they give concrete evidence of the dialogic process at work within these email communications, and of the agency – indeed, the ingenuity -- that these newcomer ELLs have demonstrated in their compositions.

As the facilitator of this critically-oriented project, at times I did go beyond making editorial recommendations to steer students toward particular kinds of expressions, ones which I felt would increase the possibility of obtaining social or material benefit from the exchanges. Such moments aligned with my interpretation of Fairclough's exhortation for a pedagogy of "critical language awareness" in language instruction, the attempt to "equip them with a resource for intervention in and reshaping of discursive practices and the power relations that ground them, both in other domains and within education itself" (Fairclough, 1995). When such moments of critical language awareness instruction factored into a student composition, analysis of the language takes into account my deliberate attempts to manipulate it. Several of those moments are described in this chapter, including the direction I suggested, the actual written compositions, and the resulting response from the adult partner. Compared to my typical in-class actions as the project facilitator, which consisted primarily of assisting students

with more limited expressive abilities, these "critical language awareness" moments were rare departures from an ongoing scramble to assist ten students simultaneously. I state this with the intent of emphasizing that in all but a few instances, the words reproduced here reflect the students' intended messages, or at the least, their intents to express themselves in a non-native language[8].

Despite the presence of "discursive infelicities," having concluded my analysis, I maintain the position that this format for language practice stands in contrast to much of the instruction that newcomer ELLs receive in public schools. It constitutes a hybrid space, rare within formal, stable institutions, where power dynamics are less rigid and more contestable (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995; Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2000; K. D. Hall, 2002). Whereas these email exchanges, relatively brief in duration and pedagogical scope, likely did not and will not portend actual shifts in power arrangements for the students, they did allow students some practice terrain upon which to rehearse identity presentations that may serve them well in future situations; the lessons learned from these exchanges also point to instructional practices that may further the critical language awareness project.

FELICITOUS ALIGNMENT – MARÍA & ERICA

[8] This statement does not account for the resources students mustered in their attempts to express themselves. Within the heterglossic realm of the classroom, students had access to peers' and adults' linguistic repertoires, and physical resources including texts, dictionaries, and classroom displays, not to mention the wildly heteroglossic resource of an Internet-connected computer (Bakhtin, 1981; Moraes, 1996). In this study, I make the assumption that students accessed resources in order to arrive at a point of reasonable satisfaction that their words conveyed intended meanings.

María's messages to Erica contained much of the same "mentor talk" as the other adults' – the difficulty of learning English, encouragement to work hard with the promise of future rewards, and the possibility of learning from mistakes. Unlike the others' communications, however, María embedded her mentor talk within a discursive style that promoted a higher degree of alignment between her discourse and the identity of her partner. Some factors contributed from the outset to a greater probability of alignment. María was the youngest adult participant, at 24 years, just seven years older than Erica. Both eagerly and regularly participated in youth-oriented Internet-based communications; by the end of the project, the two had provided MySpace pages for the other to consult (www.myspace.com). Erica was the sole student to have Internet access at home. This allowed her to compose longer messages at a more leisurely pace, removed from norms of classroom discourse. María and Erica both cite in their initial messages their fathers' strong influences in their development; María's father provided sponsorship and early apprenticeships in her pursuit of a law degree, while the death of Erica's father and his unfulfilled desires for her have spurred her toward the goal of a university degree.

All of these biographical commonalities are serendipitous factors in the production of a felicitous relationship. Looking beyond serendipity, María's advice and personal anecdotes, and even her words of praise, contain elements that highlight the mutual aspects of their identities, thereby lessening the mentor/mentee hierarchy and promoting solidarity. In other words, her language works strategically to solidify a budding relationship. A strong alignment in discourses gave impetus to this pair to continue their communications beyond the duration of the project, the sole pair to do so.

Like María, Erica expressed a strong sense of agency in determining her life trajectory. Many other students were brought to the U.S. in order to be reunited with family members, or because it was determined for them that more opportunities were available to them in this country. Erica, in contrast, recounts the role she played in making the difficult decision to come to the U.S. shortly after the death of her father:

> M-E 1b 13 I lived all my life
> M-E 1b 14 in Zacatecas `
> M-E 1b 15 until that my family and I decided
> M-E 1b 16 that I have come
> M-E 1b 17 to United States
> M-E 1b 18 so I can study
> M-E 1b 19 in a good school
> M-E 1b 20 and to can learn others languages.
> M-E 1b 21 My mother tells me
> M-E 1b 22 that if I want
> M-E 1b 23 to continue
> M-E 1b 24 with my education
> M-E 1b 25 and I said yes,
> M-E 1b 26 but I have a big sadness
> M-E 1b 27 because, my mother isn't
> M-E 1b 28 with me
> M-E 1b 29 she is
> M-E 1b 30 in Mexico.

In this passage, Erica gives evidence that her family is apprenticing her into a role of autonomous decision-making. She frames the decision as a mutual one, though she identifies two parties making the choice, her family and herself (M-E 1b 15). Following this, she hones in on a conversation between her and her mother, her mother ultimately putting the choice in her hands (M-E 1b 21-25). (I interpret, "My mother tells me" as "My mother asked me.") Erica's decision entails the acceptance of a personal, negative consequence, the "sadness" she feels for the separation from her mother (M-E 1b 26-30); nevertheless, she makes the move.

Given the loss of her father (at the age of 15), a decision to remain in her mother's care would have been entirely justifiable. However, she identifies two desires that shaped her choice:

> M-E 1b 34 I want
> M-E 1b 35 to continue
> M-E 1b 36 with my education,
> M-E 1b 37 because I like
> M-E 1b 38 to study so hard.
> M-E 1b 39 My father always told me
> M-E 1b 40 that he wanted the best
> M-E 1b 41 for me,
> M-E 1b 42 he always wished
> M-E 1b 43 that one day I will be a lawyer
> M-E 1b 44 or something else,
> M-E 1b 45 but he died before
> M-E 1b 46 that I can show
> M-E 1b 47 that I can do it.

In this passage, Erica does not cite the instrumentality of a U.S.-based education as a rationale for leaving, but her own passion for learning, an identity that resonates with María, who had cited her own love for learning across a variety of subjects in the first email (M-E 1a 39-50, 125-128). Furthermore, Erica has embraced the goals of her father as part of her own aspirations, his death giving her extra resolve to see them through. Because María was a practicing lawyer in Mexico before her own move to the U.S., and because she was apprenticed into this role by her father (M-E 1a 51-60), Erica's father's goal (now her own) adds an extra poignancy and solidarity to their dialogue.

Erica's resolve to take full advantage of educational opportunities is evidenced in her references to schoolwork. All of the NHS students are required to take a technology class in their second year and as part of the coursework, they consult a state-produced database that matches a choice of career with a recommended course of study. In-class

projects involving career and educational planning coincided with the duration of this study, though Erica was the sole student to indicate that she was actively using this database to examine her options:

> M-E 1b 66 In the school
> M-E 1b 67 I am looking
> M-E 1b 68 for many careers
> M-E 1b 69 and I find one
> M-E 1b 70 that interests me,
> M-E 1b 71 I like the career
> M-E 1b 72 of Administration,
> M-E 1b 73 I just looking what classes
> M-E 1b 74 I need
> M-E 1b 75 to have
> M-E 1b 76 to be a Administrator.

Setting aside the question of legitimacy of a database that purports to connect high school course offerings with a presumably post-university career, Erica's interest in it provides further confirmation that she is attempting to build a trajectory toward a professional career. In my experience, many students from lower socioecomic strata declare the intent of becoming a societally-valued professional, such as a lawyer or a doctor, without the cultural capital from home or school that will allow them to realize that pathway. Erica demonstrates that she is actively pursuing resources that will fill in the gaps between expressed desire and a viable course of action.

Previously, I cited the words of Sara, the mentor of Yessica, who provided anecdotal information of her perseverance in learning English in spite of a negative judgment from her peers. Erica, in writing to María, includes her own anecdote about this phenomenon as she recounts her latest experience with standardized testing:

> M-E 8b 33 The last Tuesday I did my TAKS text
> M-E 8b 34 of Reading.
> M-E 8b 35 I finished my exam
> M-E 8b 36 at 8:00pm

M-E 8b 37 and I'm too sad,
M-E 8b 38 because I was the last.
M-E 8b 39 I hoped more
M-E 8b 40 from me,
M-E 8b 41 like finished more early!!!
M-E 8b 42 It's to embarrassing
M-E 8b 43 with all my classmates!!!!

Negative results on this exam typically entail a more prescribed list of courses in the following school year. For ELLs a non-passing score all but ensures their continuance in "regular" (non college-oriented) required classes, as well as non-credit ESL tutorials in lieu of elective offerings. All but a few of Erica's peers at NHS will continue in the ESL track at their next high schools. I do not know if Erica was aware of these stakes before this test but I do know that successfully running this gauntlet has opened possibilities in her next two years of school that only a handful of newcomer secondary ELLs will similarly experience. Thus this perseverance has an immediate, and dramatic, effect, lending credence to María's many exhortations.

Finally, in constructing the argument that Erica's sociocultural identity has a felicitous alignment with María's "mentor talk," I wish to depart from a narrow definition of "mentor talk" confined solely to recommendations, phrased directly or through anecdotes, of goal-setting, strategic thinking, a strong work ethic, and continued practice of English. In this instance, I present an example of Erica's appropriation of María's language related more to María's cultural capital as a member of a sociocultural elite class. This appropriation supports Gee's call for "language apprenticeships," where regular contact with discourses of sociocultural power can provide students linguistic tools that gain them traction within upper tiers of a stratified society (1990). Though never having experienced museum culture, Erica finds within María's language an

expressive tool that allows her to convey solidarity and support for María's love of art. In doing so, she adds to her own linguistic repertoire a culturally valuable reference.

María uses the phrase "I had the opportunity to..." when referring to travel. In four instances, this phrase occurs:

- In obtaining a legal internship as a college student in Washington, D.C. (M-E 1a 65-67)
- In traveling through Europe and visiting museums there upon graduation from high school (M-E 4a 100-105)
- In traveling to the U.S. Pacific Northwest with her husband, who was sent there for his consulting job (M-E 5a 22-26)
- In visiting art galleries in Seattle with the intent to purchase a piece (M-E 5a 60-63)

I read her use of this phrase, in lieu of a simpler "I went to" or "I visited," as a genuine appreciation for these opportunities, but also a discreet way of referring to the benefits that correspond to a privileged sociocultural status. The phrase suggests María's view of these events as providential rather than as givens in one's life. (She uses the phrase once more in the negative case, when stating that she had not yet been to Erica's home region of Mexico, thus indicating the expected pleasure in doing so) (M-E 2a 10-14).

When María asks Erica if she too has visited museums, Erica appropriates the phrase in her reply:

> M-E 4b 42 and about the museum
> M-E 4b 43 I doesn't been
> M-E 4b 44 in one.
> M-E 4b 45 I am so happy

M-E 4b 46 that you can had the opportunity
M-E 4b 47 and went to Europe.

Though she professes she has not shared in a museum-going experience, thereby indicating a lack of correspondence in their sociocultural identities, she does have the foresight to share in her adult partner's obvious pleasure in both museum culture and travel. The verbatim appropriation of the phrase points to her experimentation with the expression as well as the importance that she attaches to it.

In Erica's next email, the phrase appears again, this time as a response to María's trip to the Pacific Northwest and to her gallery visit:

M-E 5b 10 I am happy
M-E 5b 11 for you,
M-E 5b 12 because you saw some
M-E 5b 13 of your family
M-E 5b 14 and you have a good opportunity
M-E 5b 15 to see the Art Museums
M-E 5b 16 that are in that city
M-E 5b 17 (specially the paintings).

This time, she demonstrates further incorporation of the phrase into her linguistic repertoire, changing "had" to "have." Furthermore, she takes on a more knowledgeable tone about the culture of museums and about María's identity, using a final parenthetical phrase to pinpoint María's chief interest, the paintings. She has not yet sorted the distinction between a gallery and a museum, but she has taken a step closer to a sociocultural identity that values formal presentations of art.

These brief exchanges may prove more valuable to Erica's future than the explicit "mentor talk" that María has employed. The language and topics contained within the exchanges, and Erica's ready appropriation of them, point to her ability to present a diversified, and diversifying, sociocultural identity, even in the absence of direct

experience. That this appropriation comes in the course of a mutually satisfying and affirming correspondence suggest that Gee's notion of a language apprenticeship is relevant to email communications between adult and student, but more effective still when there is felicitous alignment between the two participants (1990).

PARTIAL ALIGNMENT – MATEO & PABLO

Pablo's school-based identity has been maddeningly unpredictable for his teachers, veering from the scholarly, as witnessed in his asking to take history texts home for independent reading, to deliberate and overt disruptions of classroom proceedings. In this project, he presented a similarly ambivalent attitude, yet offered some clues to his resistance. In response to Mateo's first email, in which he stated his goals for the conversation (the sharing of experiences "as a professional" and the importance of education for "personal development"), Pablo countered with a response that initially ratifies Mateo's point of view on education and its rewards but then shifts direction:

M-P 1b 20 I think
M-P 1b 21 that the most important goal
M-P 1b 22 for me
M-P 1b 23 is to learn English,
M-P 1b 24 and to graduate
M-P 1b 25 from the high school
M-P 1b 26 and maybe go
M-P 1b 27 to the university,
M-P 1b 28 so I can have a good job
M-P 1b 29 when I back to Mexico.
M-P 1b 30 I want to go to Mexico
M-P 1b 31 because I miss my family and my friends
M-P 1b 32 because here I can't go to cotorrear (chat)
M-P 1b 33 with my camaradas. (buddies)
M-P 1b 34 In Mexico yo tenia a Lott of camaradas (I had a lot of buddies)
M-P 1b 35 and our name was SOUTH HOMIES 13
M-P 1b 36 and I liked to go to the dancing parties
M-P 1b 37 with them.

In Pablo's version, the instrumentality of education is best used to effect a return to his homeland, and to his past life. From lines 32-37, he steps away from his current identity to embrace his past one, and in doing so, offers a form of resistance to both this education project and the larger project of schooling. As I read his first message, I requested that he write completely in Spanish. "Ah, he understands," Pablo replied, signifying that he was not going to give himself over completely to the artifice of writing in English to a native Spanish speaker, even when the language was easily within his reach. Similarly, he steps away from a strictly pro-school orientation to offer a depiction of the time he spent with his "camaradas." The name for this group of buddies, "South Homies 13," carries with it an aura of gang association, especially the '13,' recognizable (thanks to American-produced mass media) in much of Latin America as a reference to Mala Salvatrucha, a notorious American-Salvadoran group. On the other hand, the menace is diminished not only by mentioning their preferred activity ("dancing parties") by also by the reference to "Homies," the collectible figurines that (positively) depict Chicano culture in East Los Angeles (www.homies.com).[9] In the mid-point interview, Pablo stated that he had decided to talk no more of his past life in Mexico lest Mateo think he was a "vago" (lazy) and not attending school here (Interview, November 9, 2006). Almost immediately, Pablo presents a conflicted, multifaceted identity, and an awareness of what is gained and lost on either side of the border.

[9] I was tipped off to Pablo's interest in Homies by his in-class visits to the website long before the email exchanges began.

Pablo also offered rebuttals to Mateo's emphasis on the virtues of a well-disciplined mind. They found a shared interest in soccer, Mateo mentioning several times his enjoyment of the game as a cerebral pursuit and his admiration for the Brazilian star Ronaldinho, both for his many hours of practice and for his mind which works "as fast as his body" (M-P 3a 38). Pablo in response put up his own image of a soccer ideal:

M-P 3b 08 I have to tell you
M-P 3b 09 that I like
M-P 3b 10 how Ronaldinho plays
M-P 3b 11 but is not my favorite soccer player,
M-P 3b 12 like I already told you
M-P 3b 13 my favorite soccer player is Cuauthemoc,
M-P 3b 14 and he invented la cuautemilla
M-P 3b 15 when the world's cup,
M-P 3b 16 when he had the ball
M-P 3b 17 and two guys wanted to take the ball
M-P 3b 18 of him,
M-P 3b 19 so he took the ball
M-P 3b 20 between his legs
M-P 3b 21 and he jumped
M-P 3b 22 with the ball
M-P 3b 23 very fast
M-P 3b 24 y se burlo a los dos jugadores (he made fun of the two players)
M-P 3b 25 y anoto el gol de la victorya. (and he scored the victorious goal)

Though Pablo graciously admits to Ronaldinho's virtues, he turns emphatically ("like I already told you") (M-P 3b 12) to a Mexican player as his role model and a kind of trickster hero as opposed to a strategist, one able to make his opponents look foolish at the moment of triumph. For an added thrust of nationalist pride, Pablo switches to Spanish for the punch line.

As the email conversation continues, Pablo's longing for Mexico reappears in his emails as he deliberates about his educational and work pathways. In his fourth message to Mateo, after Mateo had presented his recommendation to establish goals, then

strategies to meet those goals, he lays out these deliberations and solicits Mateo's feedback:

M-P 4b 13 About the work,
M-P 4b 14 I would like to work
M-P 4b 15 in a store,
M-P 4b 16 because I can meet many people,
M-P 4b 17 but what I really want
M-P 4b 18 is to continue studying,
M-P 4b 19 so I can be a bilingual teacher
M-P 4b 20 or a math teacher
M-P 4b 21 or to be in the Air Force,
M-P 4b 22 but if I find a job in a store or something like that
M-P 4b 23 I will work on that
M-P 4b 24 for now.

M-P 4b 25 I don't really know
M-P 4b 26 what to do
M-P 4b 27 with my life
M-P 4b 28 because I want to go
M-P 4b 29 back to Mexico
M-P 4b 30 but there it is harder
M-P 4b 31 to find a good job.
M-P 4b 32 My father says
M-P 4b 33 that if I want to have a good job
M-P 4b 34 I have to stay
M-P 4b 35 in the better place
M-P 4b 36 to have a better job.
M-P 4b 37 What do you think
M-P 4b 38 that is the best place
M-P 4b 39 to find a good job?
M-P 4b 40 Where do you think
M-P 4b 41 that I can find a better job
M-P 4b 42 here in the U. S. or in Mexico?.

In the first paragraph, Pablo draws a line between pursuing retail work, one of Mateo's suggestions for him, and continuing his studies beyond high school. That line is especially stark for an undocumented student in the U.S., where the retail work is almost certain to include long hours, low wages without benefits, and without much chance for advancement. At the very least, Pablo is aware that higher education is a possibility even for undocumented students, and he suggests some careers that capitalize on his bilingual

skills and his personal interests, and that may be viable on either side of the border. He concludes the paragraph by returning to Mateo's suggestion and admitting that it could work side-by-side with schooling.

In the next paragraph, he returns to a place of conflict, one involving his desire to return (to his mother) in Mexico, his vision of an economic future, and the advice of his father, who brought him to the U.S. and gave him a new educational outlook, but at an emotional cost. He attempts to bring Mateo into a kind of three-way conversation, first by stating his thoughts, then his father's, then turning to Mateo for his opinion. The importance and the difficulty of the question lead Pablo to repeat it twice, first asking more generally "what" Mateo thinks is "best place to find a good job" (M-P 4b 39), then more pointedly asking "where" the "better job" exists, "here in the U.S. or in Mexico?" (M-P 4b 42). Even in asking the question, Pablo seems to know that his "want" (M-P 4b 28) will be overwhelmed by the economic practicality of finding a "good" (repeated three times) or "better job" (repeated twice). Within these strictly economic parameters, the question of the "better place" will definitely go against his desires.

Mateo did not weigh in on this decision and in fact did not reply to Pablo until after Pablo had sent his next email. In Pablo's next message to Mateo, he declares that he has reached a decision about his career choice.

M-P 5b 14 I think
M-P 5b 15 that what I want
M-P 5b 16 is to be in the air force
M-P 5b 17 and when a graduate
M-P 5b 18 from the high school
M-P 5b 19 I gonna try to do that.

By "air force" (M-P 5b 16), I inquired when I next saw Pablo in person, he meant the Mexican Air Force. And indeed, setting aside the logistics of how he would accomplish this, it seems like a remarkably adroit solution to his various dilemmas. It permits a return to his homeland with honorable intentions and a resounding affirmation of his Mexican identity. It entails both continuing education and employment, thus sidestepping those reasons for remaining in the U.S. It requires academic intelligence, mechanical dexterity, and bravery. And as Mateo had suggested, it presents a goal not solely based upon monetary gain, with much to offer in pride and personal satisfaction.

Thereupon ends Pablo's discussions with Mateo about both work and education. Their final email exchanges discussed plans for the winter holidays and in their face-to-face meeting, they shared in greater detail how each had arrived in the U.S. Mateo stated in his interview that he attempted to make clear for Pablo the structures of decision-making in the military, and how, at least at the outset, he would have very little autonomy. Pablo too recalled this part of their conversation in his interview and acknowledged that that would be something for him to accept but nevertheless, he remained adamant in his decision.

It would be easy to categorize Pablo's statement as teenage bravado, a flight of romantic fancy, a repudation of a future life in the U.S., a falsified or aggrandized "Internet identity" (Lam, 2000), or even as a method of avoiding conflicts and decisions that are staring him in the face, such as immediate school options. In fact, all of these may have factored into his declaration. I do think it valuable, however, to consider that through these email exchanges, Pablo was given space to discuss the swirl of influences

that make up his socially-situated identity and to "try on" elements of Mateo's strategies for social advancement and personal satisfaction. In the course of this identity experimentation, Pablo returned at several points to the fissure between his proudly Mexican identity and his pragmatically oriented location in the United States, and he looked for ways to override pragmatism, such as his preference for the Mexican soccer player Cuahtemoc over the "cerebral" Ronaldinho, or his declaration of joining the Mexican Air Force. At other times, he brought his own pragmatism to bear, such as when he shrugged off the possibility of a future in retail work, knowing its limitations for an undocumented student as opposed to the pathways of opportunity potentially available through higher education.

Because of Pablo's appropriation of some of Mateo's discourse of self-advancement, I would hesitate to call the surprising direction he took as a sign of infelicitous alignment. In fact, I hope to have provided evidence that Mateo's discourse was well enough aligned with Pablo's ideological orientation for him to have made creative use of it. In that regard, I see Pablo's transformation of Mateo's discourse as evidence of hybridity—taking a popular discourse of self-advancement in a postindustrial, corporate-dominated society, and using it to determine a new set of goals that will actually distance him from that very society. Looking over the exchanges of these two and the supplemental ethnographic data, I also came across several instances where Mateo provided evidence of his own hybrid work within stereotypical discourses. Unfortunately, because this hybridity remained hidden to Pablo, opportunities were lost

for conversations that may have opened other possible futures for Pablo as well as the identification of the two as allies working toward goals rooted in equity.

The first instance came in Mateo's initial email to Pablo, when he described one of the pleasures of his work. As a banker, Mateo had started as teller, had transferred to the loan division, and was at the time of this correspondence selling mortgages to customers. He is a sought-after commodity in the banking industry in this region for the breadth of his experience but also for his bilingualism. He often gets placed in banks that have large Latino clienteles; these banks have for the most part been in lower and working-class neighborhoods, as well as busy commercial corridors that cater to Latino families or workers. As a mortgage broker, he typically works with many first-time homeowners, a significant percentage of whom are undocumented residents. This places him in an unusual position of working within a huge financial network that sees tremendous profit to be made within the recent immigrant market but which for political reasons and in order to preserve an appearance of fiscal conservatism does not avidly promote itself as a lender to undocumented residents. On the other side, immigrants who want to establish a foothold in this country need trustworthy advocates for them within the financial institutions that will help them achieve their goals without taking an exorbitant cut. At the nexus of these two forces, the financial institutions and the recent arrivals, is Mateo. He describes his job to Pablo as follows:

M-P 1a 62 For some years now
M-P 1a 63 in my job
M-P 1a 64 I been helping people
M-P 1a 65 with different backgrounds and cultures,
M-P 1a 66 to manage their finances
M-P 1a 67 and make their financial dreams

M-P 1a 68 come true.
M-P 1a 69 By helping
M-P 1a 70 my clients reach their financial freedom
M-P 1a 71 I feel like
M-P 1a 72 I am giving back
M-P 1a 73 to the community,
M-P 1a 74 and that I am working
M-P 1a 75 for the good
M-P 1a 76 of man kind.
M-P 1a 77 This is the personal satisfaction
M-P 1a 78 that I get
M-P 1a 79 from my job
M-P 1a 80 other than my salary

Line 65, people "with different backgrounds and cultures" is, I believe, a form of sanitized corporate-speak, coded language for his primary client base, the working class, minorities, and undocumented immigrants. He continues this description with more slogan-friendly speech, [helping people] "to manage their finances and make their financial dreams come true" (M-P 1a 66-68). The next sentence, he moves beyond typical lending institution claims that they allow people to make the purchases they want to make, and he states his mission to help people to obtain "financial freedom," a slogan-ready statement which actually subverts the profit-generating *raison d'etre* of the banking industry. This interpretation is reinforced by Mateo's declaration to me that because he can work with clients in Spanish, his conversations remain outside of the gaze of his employers, and he feels free to explain to clients the hidden costs and risks of doing business with banks (Interview, November 12, 2007). It is also bolstered by his recent transfer from a mortgage division, where he was chastised for helping clients clear red-tape hurdles they would not have managed on their own. Further fueling his desire to transfer was his own marginalization within the department; his salary was tied to a commission, but because he was limited to working primarily with first-time buyers and

Spanish speakers, fewer mortgages were approved and the prices of the homes were considerably less than those that were assigned to other mortgage brokers. While Mateo has much good to say about his opportunities for advancement and corporate munificence, his own marginalized position within those same corporate structures has inflicted a recent wound.

Mateo's mélange of corporate discourse and a coded language of resistance missed its intended mark in his communications with Pablo. I believe a more explicitly worded description of his work in banks with Latinos and recent arrivals would have generated solidarity with Pablo and taken the conversation toward a more frank discussion of what pathways are legitimately available to the undocumented.

One other instance occurred where a confluence of Mateo's corporate identity and his personal identity became evident through analysis yet remained invisible to Pablo. In Mateo's second email message, he commiserated with Pablo about being a recent arrival to the U.S.

M-P 2a 19 I can understand
M-P 2a 20 how much you miss your friends and Matamoros.
M-P 2a 21 I went through the same
M-P 2a 22 when I first moved
M-P 2a 23 to the US.
M-P 2a 24 I knew
M-P 2a 25 I wasn't going back
M-P 2a 26 for a while,
M-P 2a 27 so I decided
M-P 2a 28 to start
M-P 2a 29 making new friends.
M-P 2a 30 Soccer always help me
M-P 2a 31 to do that.
M-P 2a 32 I made friends
M-P 2a 33 at the fields
M-P 2a 34 playing
M-P 2a 35 or at work
M-P 2a 36 when I started

M-P 2a 37 talking
M-P 2a 38 about soccer.
M-P 2a 39 You can use
M-P 2a 40 what you like
M-P 2a 41 to do
M-P 2a 42 and find people
M-P 2a 43 that have the same interest
M-P 2a 44 to make a connection
M-P 2a 45 and start a friendship.

Mateo provided an initial strategy for making acquaintances through mutual interest in soccer, an idea that intrigued Pablo enough for him mention it as one of the highlights of their correspondence (Interview, November 9, 2006). From talk of the soccer field, Mateo generalizes the strategy to "use what you like to do" as means of pursuing of friendships (M-P 2a 39-41). In our final interview, Mateo further expanded the idea of finding mutual interests and revealed it as a sales strategy as well as an approach he took with Pablo.

Ben: You said in your profession you look for the human interactions, you learn to read people. What kind of things do you look for generally? What are your secrets?

Mateo: No, it's no secrets, it's just their personality, um, personality because in a sales environment you need to deal with different people with different personalities and there are different things that makes them make decisions, basically. So if as a sales professionals you learn to identify what kind of personality you're dealing with it's easier for you to make a connection with your client and once you make the connection you can close a sale or a deal.

...

Ben: So you were working on him [Pablo] a little bit...

Mateo: Yeah.

Ben: In the hope of establishing a connection.

Mateo: Right.

(Interview, February 13, 2007)

Some important distinctions exist between Mateo's initial advice to Pablo and this sales strategy, most notably the search for common interests as opposed to the identification of

interests in a client, then the move to "make a connection" so as to "close a sale." However, within Mateo's later words lies a potential for critical language awareness, the pursuit of more equitable relations through a conscious attention to language (Fairclough, 1995). The strategy that Mateo outlines for making a sale is akin to Gee's idea of "mushfaking" (1990), providing enough clues to your sympathizing with a personality (what Gee would likely called a socially-situated identity) so that you "pass," even though your expressive language may not carry all the trappings of that particular sociocultural group. In Mateo's case, "passing" means making the sale, but this strategy could apply to negotiating in many arenas of society. In this situation, because Mateo did not have normal cues for conversation, he attempted to ratify Pablo's statements as well as his identity in the pursuit of this connection. One example of this comes in the email cited above, when Mateo not only picks up Pablo's thread on soccer, but he opens by stating, " I can understand how much you miss your friends and *Matamoros*" (M-P 2a 19-20) (my emphasis). By naming Pablo's home city, as opposed to "Mexico" or "your home," Mateo captures a piece of Pablo's identity, reflecting it back to Pablo in order to strengthen their rapport. It is this careful attention to clues about another's identity that allows Mateo to make business-related connections and close deals.

In an American school culture that values extols the virtues of hard work and honesty, teaching a high school-age student to reflect the personalities of others in order to achieve personal gains may seem like a fostering of disingenuity, or a back door pathway to achievement. I do not believe this to be so. As Pablo proceeds through his high school education, in order to stay on a viable pathway to a four-year university, he

will have to negotiate several critical junctures where his status at a newcomer immigrant and non-native English speaker will not favor his negotiations. First, he will have to register at his home high school for the next two years of study. Given his personal history, and that he will be enrolling in his junior year, when high-stakes exit exams are taken in four subjects, those who receive him and enroll him at that school will be inclined to place him in non-credit English as a Second Language classes and standardized test preparatory classes. These classes typically take up elective slots in his schedule, giving him fewer elective options; in a worse scenario, these classes may be assigned in lieu of classes that are mandatory for graduation, with the philosophy that a high degree of fluency is required before taking "regular" English classes. This philosophy has contributed to both the "ESL lifer" phenomenon and the high rates of dropouts of high school-age second-language learners (Fry, 2005a; Greene & Winters, 2004; TEA, 2005b; Valdés, 1996). Pablo will need to be equipped not only with the knowledge of what classes he has the right to avoid, and the electives that will best serve him in a pathway to college, but also with the negotiation skills to refuse classes that he does not believe he needs or those that do not pertain to his goals.

Assuming he runs this gauntlet, a second, even trickier set of negotiation awaits him. In this round, in order to remain a strong applicant for four-year universities, as well as increase his odds of receiving a quality secondary education, Pablo will need to advocate for his placement in non-"regular," Advanced Placement or Honors classes. Self-placement into upper-track classes is a right according to school district policy but at the moment of course selection, a strong push occurs from counselors, registrars, and

classroom teachers to enroll English Language Learners in lower-track classes. In addition to research supporting this trend, my own experiences as an advocate for students at the time of registration lend credence to this claim (Bettie, 2003; Harklau, 1994; Olsen, 1997). Overcoming a school culture that is resistant to recent immigrants in top-tier classes, particularly those who do not come from a highly educated class of global elites (C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001) requires no small amount of resoluteness but could be aided by tactics gleaned from salesmanship.

Seen from another angle, what Mateo describes in his work life is akin to the "double consciousness" that duBois proposed for African-Americans over a century ago as they negotiated white-dominated society (duBois, 1903/1953). By knowingly adopting another identity for strategic purposes, one retains hold of a core, "primary" discourse and runs less risk of forsaking that discourse for a more commercially viable yet ultimately subtractive "secondary" discourse (Gee, 1990). In this light, what may initially seem an unseemly application of a sales tactic becomes a valued tool in an arsenal to confront inequity and prejudice within the culture of public schools.

Of course and unfortunately, talk of Mateo's sales practices as a potential tool for Pablo and for any other student currently remains in the realm of the hypothetical. Although Mateo opened his initial correspondence with the explicit intent of communicating his own life experiences that have proven successful, the type of advice he proferred remained in the realm of non-controversial, general maxims for success in a corporate world. He did not apply his current business practices to practical applications in Pablo's life, and I had not conducted an analysis that would have pointed to the

feasibility of his taking this step. I do return to the theme of instruction for critical language awareness in the final chapter of this work, when I discuss implications and potentials for future research programs of similar design.

Though I characterize the discourse enacted between Mateo and Pablo as partially aligned, Pablo does appropriate and utilize one of Mateo's linguistic tools, albeit to different effect. In the prior example of Erica's appropriation of "had the opportunity," her intended meaning was closely aligned to María's original emphasis on providential occurrences in her life. Pablo lifts the phrase "changing subjects" from Mateo's compositions, but rather than use it as a simple, explicit refocusing of subject matter, he employs it the opening to a stronger assertion of personal opinion. Bakhtin, referring to such a reworking of language, writes, "Our speech, that is, all our utterances... is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness,' varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate" (1989, p. 89). In this example, Pablo demonstrates a heightened awareness to the words (perhaps because of the newness to his linguistic repertoire), and reworks them as a strategic tool.

Mateo first used "changing subjects" in his third email, as a transition between talk about soccer to a discussion of auto repair:

> M-P 3a 54 Changing subjects,
> M-P 3a 55 I know a little
> M-P 3a 56 about cars.

In the subsequent email, Pablo employs the phrase as a preface to his depiction of his favorite soccer player, which, as I previously discussed, came as a rebuttal to Mateo's presentation of an ideal soccer player:

> M-P 3b 04 Thanks for write for me again,
> M-P 3b 05 because this mean
> M-P 3b 06 that you are reading my messages.
>
> M-P 3b 07 Changing subjects.
> M-P 3b 08 I have to tell you
> M-P 3b 09 that I like
> M-P 3b 10 how Ronaldinho plays
> M-P 3b 11 but is not my favorite soccer player,
> M-P 3b 12 like I already told you
> M-P 3b 13 my favorite soccer player is Cuauthemoc,

The phrase moves his conversation from an expression of gratitude to a point of contention. As I previously related, I believe that the distinction that Pablo makes is closely connected to his identity as a Mexican national; "Changing subjects" is a prelude and pointer to this personally important assertion.

His other use of "changing subjects" occurs in his final exam for the class in which I conducted the project. The teacher, pleased by the work of the students in this project hoping to establish a connection between the project and his regular class activities, had set up his final exam as an email exchange, where he sent the exam questions to the students' email accounts, and had them reply to him with their answers (cc'ing me). The third question was phrased, "What advice (consejos) do you have for [teacher's name] for the next semester?" Pablo's reply was:

> Changing subjects, I want to tell you that sometimes this class is boring, and I gonna tell you how I think that you can make it interesting
> - you have to bring cookies at less one time for each week.
> - you don't have to take to much time in the warm up.
> - you have to talk about interesting things and bring some pictures about it.

- everybody needs to participate in the class, and more work in teams.

Because of the wording of the question, "changing subject" or another transitional device is not required in the answer. Pablo's use of the phrase acts as an prelude to statements that challenge traditional teacher-student classroom norms of dialogue and their accompanying power relations (Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995). His criticisms are targeted at teacher behaviors and suggested changes are phrased in imperative form. Like much of Pablo's school-based identity, these suggestions contain a mix of desires – for greater classroom challenges (not too much time spent in warm-up, interesting subject matter, full class participation) and for increased personal liberties (cookies, and more work in teams).

By appropriating "changing subjects" and utilizing in this way, it could be argued that Pablo did not have complete understanding of it as a neutral transitional device. I do not believe this to be the case. Given Pablo's many frustrations with life in the U.S. and his uncertainty about his future, I see him seizing upon the phrase and in an instance of Bakhtinian appropriation, transforming it in order to present a "subject" that in his view has not received enough recognition – himself.

PARTIAL ALIGNMENT – SARA & YESSICA

Despite finding a shared topic of the goal of learning English, and despite not raising the subject herself, Sara expressed some criticism in her midpoint interview that Yessica had not identified other goals beyond the acquisition of English. Her years of experience as a mentor had taught her to look for initiative within her mentees and hold

back on prompting a goal-oriented view for their futures. When I asked what she thought might become of Yessica, she replied,

> Well, I think a lot of it depends upon her... and the support that she has at home because I have been a mentor for a lot of girls and unfortunately my record is not very good (chuckling). There's only one girl that made it and she got her degree after she married and had children so... but the others they dropped out of school or they became pregnant (Interview, November 13, 2006).

Later, she stated, "I wish I knew more [about Yessica] but I have to tell you that in my experience the people that I have helped a lot are people that wanted that help" (Interview, November 13, 2006). As the facilitator of this critically-oriented project, I was concerned by Sara's ambivalence toward Yessica. I feared that Yessica's talk almost exclusively of her family thus far in the email exchanges, including a problematic family history, had led Sara to believe that Yessica's identity was so family-dependent that she could not envision an academic or a workplace-based future for herself. In the classroom, I had observed that Yessica took a long time in her compositions; she did not appear to need much assistance in expressing her thoughts and she willingly asked for help when stuck, but as Sara stated, "The first message was very cryptic, she really didn't say very much. The second one was very personal but I really don't know what subjects she likes, does she like to read, you know, I really don't know much about her life today" (Interview, November 13, 2006). I had attributed her slowness to a deliberate style in her composition process but I could now see that the brevity of her messages were leading to a truncated vision of her as a person. I determined that I would take Sara's critique back to Yessica and encourage her to move beyond talk of her family members and family life.

The next day, I spoke with Yessica in between classes. I told her that she was communicating with a person who was not "simply" an important woman in the city, or an important Latina – many people in the city considered a central figure in city life, with many connections in politics and the business world. I told Yessica that at certain moments in our lives, we have the opportunity to talk with important people, and we need to do our best to take advantage of them. I then asked her if she could find extra time to write a longer email message to Sara. She immediately agreed and together, we went to two teachers, to request homework that night that would free her up during class time the following day.

After lunch the following day, I greeted Yessica in the hallway. She had already turned in her assignments to her afternoon teachers and was free to work with me. We sat in an empty classroom, each of us logging on to separate machines. For the entire 90-minute class period, Yessica worked on her composition, mostly in silence, occasionally stopping to ask a question about an expression or a verb tense. At the end, after she had clicked send, she put her head on the keyboard and exhaled. After an opening paragraph that wishes Sara a happy Christmas and informs her that she found a job and would be working for much of the holiday break, she launches into a new train of thought:

S-Y 4b 25 Sara I wanted to tell you
S-Y 4b 26 that Mr. Kramer tell me
S-Y 4b 27 that you are interested
S-Y 4b 28 in my future plans.
S-Y 4b 29 I will
S-Y 4b 30 my first plan is
S-Y 4b 31 to graduate
S-Y 4b 32 from [Newcomer] High school
S-Y 4b 33 and learn as much English as possible.
S-Y 4b 34 Then my home school is [...]

S-Y 4b 35 but I don't wanted
S-Y 4b 36 to go that school
S-Y 4b 37 because I like more a school
S-Y 4b 38 that is called [..]
S-Y 4b 39 because I think
S-Y 4b 40 that they have better professional programs
S-Y 4b 41 like infant care.

S-Y 4b 42 After High school
S-Y 4b 43 I want
S-Y 4b 44 to study
S-Y 4b 45 to be a Flight Attendant.
S-Y 4b 46 but for study this career
S-Y 4b 47 in U.S.A.
S-Y 4b 48 I need papers.
S-Y 4b 49 So maybe I will return
S-Y 4b 50 To Mexico
S-Y 4b 51 for flight attendant school
S-Y 4b 52 but I don't think
S-Y 4b 53 that
S-Y 4b 54 in the school
S-Y 4b 55 in Mexico
S-Y 4b 56 is as good as school
S-Y 4b 57 in U.S.A.
S-Y 4b 58 I know
S-Y 4b 59 you had lived
S-Y 4b 60 in those countries
S-Y 4b 61 now I want now I would like your advice
S-Y 4b 62 truly I would like your opinion.
S-Y 4b 63 Thank you
S-Y 4b 64 for your time.
S-Y 4b 65 Sincerely,
S-Y 4b 66 Yessica

There is much in this message to suggest that Yessica, unlike Sara's voiced impressions, has deliberated a good deal about both her short- and long-term educational and economic futures. In the short-term view, she declares her intent to get the most out of her final year at the Newcomer High School, then provides a frank assessment of her situation as a student slated to attend a chronically low-performing school, comparing her attendance there to another, larger school that includes visions of life beyond graduation. In the long-term view, she identifies herself as a student without "papers" (S-Y 4b 48), and weighs alternative pathways beyond high school, detailing the chief obstacles that

she believes she must confront—her lack of documentation in the US, which may limit her educational and employment options *versus* her perception that the quality of higher education available to her in Mexico may not be as strong. In other words, in a moment of admirable prescience and clarity, she presents a series of choices for which there are no easy answers, then defers to Sara as someone with experience "in those countries" (S-Y 4b 60) for her opinion.

Yessica's expository style also reveals her skills as strategist in drawing Sara into the discussion. She opens by addressing Sara directly, calling her attention to an important shift in the topic. Immediately thereafter, she uses my name in providing the report of two conversations, that between Sara and myself, and the follow-up between me and Yessica. By laying out this chain of communication, Yessica demonstrates her awareness of the first conversation and reports the events of the second. This email provides the third step, her response to questions that originated with Sara; it also gives proof of her responsiveness. Using proper names breaks through the depersonalizing effects of email, lending a further sense of earnestness to her project.

The sequence of decisions facing her are chronologically arranged and much like Sara's prior discussion of her methods of learning English, each decision includes a challenge. Sara's obstacles always included a self-evaluation of persistence in the face of challenge; here, Yessica always provides a viable solution that she has imagined, demonstrating her own capacity for persistence through the proposition of alternate pathways around obstacles.

Her last sentence before closing bears closer attention:

S-Y 4b 58 I know
S-Y 4b 59 you had lived
S-Y 4b 60 in those countries
S-Y 4b 61 now I want now I would like your advice
S-Y 4b 62 truly I would like your opinion.

Having presented her own dilemmas and the ambiguities of her future condition, Yessica shifts her gaze abruptly to Sara with a strongly declarative present-tense "I know" (S-Y 4b 58). With this move, she is shifting to a firmer knowledge base, building sympathy for her cause by juxtaposing the ambiguity in her life with the certainty in Sara's.

In lines 61-62, those that present Yessica's appeal to Sara, I intervened in the composition. Yessica had typed "now I want" but asked me if there was another way to phrase her request. I told her that "I would like" is considered a more polite way of making a request. When I saw that she had typed "now I would like your advice" directly after "now I want," I suggested that she keep the two phrases in there as a demonstration of her desire and the care she had taken in writing her appeal. After asking me for a translation of *"en realidad,"* she added the third part, "truly I would like your opinion." What began as a simply put "I want" now appears as a tripartite appeal, each section simultaneously softening the strength of the language ("want" to "advice" to "opinion") while building the urgency through repetition. Yessica sensed at the outset that her expressive English did not adequately express her desire for information, but given two inputs from me ("I would like" and "truly"), she had strung together a nuanced and impassioned appeal.

Strict grammarians would likely take exception to my acceptance, and indeed, my admiration, for her language as it appeared, stating that its ungrammaticality consisted of

run-on sentences and needless repetition. It is precisely this kind of appeal, written by a native Vietnamese speaker and college undergraduate appealing to a professor for a laboratory position, that Scarcella sets up as a straw horse in her arguing for a heavier emphasis on explicit grammar instruction (2003). In her example, she portrays a student woefully unskilled in how to address a societal superordinate, especially when making requests of that individual, and excoriates the public schools that allowed this student to graduate with a sense of security in her expressive English abilities.

In this study, I am countering Scarcella's perspective, which aligns neatly with a larger discourse on standards-based instruction, with another perspective, one grounded in a critically-leaning sociocultural interpretation of Yessica's language. In the former perspective, Yessica is obviously a second language learner, far removed from benchmarks of native-like fluency, and in need of significant, intense instruction given the few years she has remaining in the public school system. In the latter perspective, the critical-sociocultural, Yessica is obviously a second language learner, having arrived in this country just a little over a year ago. Nevertheless, she has demonstrated with limited expressive abilities a capacity for presenting multi-faceted dilemmas, logical reasoning skills, and a finessed request for information. Given the limited time that remains for her in the public school system, she *must* begin to exercise her expressive English abilities; otherwise, what other opportunities will she have to acquire the language of negotiation, argumentation, and self-presentation necessary for securing a reasonable degree of security in an English-dominated, economically competitive society?

Also included in this critical-sociocultural perspective is the recognition that as long as Yessica's language remains solely under the gaze of adherents to the discourse of grammaticality, it will be judged as deficient. By stepping outside of the normalizing gaze of public schools, which will continue to place Yessica and other newcomers in one or more "other" categories and further amplify their isolation from the wider society, and by providing her a different audience, one who has herself gained a foothold in American society as a non-native English speaker, reader, and writer, she will be judged by a different standard. That standard is much more likely to be one focused on the content of the message, and whether the message is delivered with a reasonable degree of comprehensibility rather than correctness (Hairston, 1981). To support this claim, in this study, when interviewed adults were asked if anything within the student language bothered them, none mentioned issues that pertained to grammar, punctuation, or other conventions of English. If there were complaints, they rested more with content issues, such as the lack of identifiable goals in the student's messages. When I asked a follow-up question that pointed more specifically to problems perceived within the English language, again, no mentors expressed disapproval. Returning to this particular exchange, in the mid-point interview that occurred before Yessica's request for assistance, Sara declared, "...her English is not as bad as I would have thought. She can communicate and for me, anyone who speaks more than one language, I value communication more than correctness and she can communicate" (Interview, November 13, 2006).

Yessica's request for assistance from Sara accomplished more than the mere communication of a request; upon receiving the message, Sara telephoned me and asked if she could meet Yessica in person before the scheduled get-together in January; she felt she could be of assistance especially in helping Yessica secure a transfer to the school of her choice. She also wished to break through the artifice of email communications and meet Yessica face-to-face. She followed up with an email to Yessica suggesting that they meet over the winter recess pending approval from Yessica's parents. In my next trip to Newcomer High School, Yessica phoned her mother, who expressed her approval of a get-together, but then, Yessica grew more hesitant.

I asked if there was a problem with Sara going to her house and she replied that that was not the issue. The chief concern was that Yessica knew from our conversation about "important people" that Sara often worked at a local government complex. Yessica had just taken a job at that complex as a night custodian. Yessica feared that their meeting face-to-face would then lead to a possible conversation at the worksite, and her employers would fire her out of concern that she would reveal her status as a 16-year-old, undocumented immigrant working nights. Just as it seemed that this pair's communication was about to take on a life of its own, moving beyond language practice and into a realm of genuine advocacy, an unforeseen barrier reared up. This barrier came in the complex form of the government's outsourcing of basic services such as custodial work and an American society that often leaves menial jobs for undocumented workers to take. A winning (low) bid for such services therefore includes the tacit understanding that within government buildings, undocumented laborers, and even minors, will be the

ones working late into the night. Yessica, as a thoughtful, forward-thinking young woman, could foresee risks for her and her co-workers in the possibility of a face-to-face meeting with Sara, so while she declared to me her intent to call Sara to fix a date, she never took action.

Yessica and Sara did eventually meet each other, at the planned gathering in late January 2007. According to both parties, they had an agreeable chat and exchanged cell phone numbers with the intent to talk further, especially around the matter of Yessica's next high school. (Yessica had also changed jobs at this point; she was now working after school at a cell-phone retail store.) As of this writing, they have not had further communication, either by email by phone. Sara remains interested in helping Yessica but falling back on her convictions learned through years of mentoring, she is waiting for Yessica to demonstrate initiative. In the final interview Yessica expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity to practice her English with someone from outside of the school and expressed some frustration with the school because "everybody's talking Spanish" (Interview, February 7, 2007). She also expressed gratitude for having met Sara and the other adult participants *"porque es agradable ver a mexicanos que han superado mucho"* (It was enjoyable to see Mexicans who had overcome a good deal.) (Interview, February 7, 2007). Yessica and her mother have discussed ways to attend the school of her choice but they have not yet hit upon a solution they believe will work. Between Sara's declared stasis and Yessica's inaction, an impasse has been reached. I can conjecture a number of reasons for Yessica's lack of action, including unfamiliarity with a culture of self-promotion, or a shift in focus to incremental advances in the working world rather than in

or through school. Given the evidence in these email messages and my knowledge of Yessica's performance in school, I do not believe that she has grown jaded about what schooling can provide her (Portes & Rumbaut, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). I do believe that while advocacy is within her reach, in some part of her and her family's thinking, the risk of exposure goes hand-in-hand with appealing to an outside agent for assistance. Yessica can easily discuss her goals but for the time being, the need to remain invisible suppresses action.

INFELICITOUS ALIGNMENT - DIEGO & JESÚS

In each of the student responses presented thus far, the student shows some indication of responding to, if not applying, the "mentor talk" of the adult partner. In this case, the student Jesús responded to Diego's initial email, where he had carefully detailed his educational and career pathways through a "life decision tree," by dismissing his identity as a student:

> D-J 1b 12 I hope
> D-J 1b 13 you understand
> D-J 1b 14 what I am trying
> D-J 1b 15 to tell you
> D-J 1b 16 because my English is too bad
> D-J 1b 17 and I want
> D-J 1b 18 you help me
> D-J 1b 19 to learn
> D-J 1b 20 to speak better than today.

Unlike other students and adults, who spoke of the difficulty inherent in the English language, here it is *Jesús's* English that is "bad." Other students recognized that the email project would assist them in their reading and writing of English; Jesús confines his

goal solely to the speaking of the language, and enlists Diego's support in this goal. After this statement, Jesús writes, in quick succession, of his family, his work, and his recent purchase of a second automobile. This initial presentation of clues to Jesús's identity paints a not abnormal picture of a young man eager to acquire oral English fluency so as to further his work life and buying power, and not as eager to pursue literacy in English. In his second email, Jesús reinforces his non-academic identity by inserting this statement in the mid-point of his message:

D-J 2b 31 I want
D-J 2b 32 to tell you many things
D-J 2b 33 but I can't do it
D-J 2b 34 because I don't know a lot of English
D-J 2b 35 sorry.

Lines 31-32 indicate a personal commitment of intentionality in the communications but the final three lines deflate that potential with an air of resignation and existential certainty ("but I can't"... "because I don't know..." "sorry") (Fairclough, 2003). Jesús does not mention any talk of schooling or his school life in the third email and returns in the fourth with more evidence of non-alignment with a school-oriented identity:

D-J 4b 42 Well today I had a test
D-J 4b 43 and it was too hard
D-J 4b 44 for me
D-J 4b 45 because I don't know how
D-J 4b 46 to write
D-J 4b 47 in English,
...
D-J 4b 52 Today is Friday
D-J 4b 53 and I had another test
D-J 4b 54 it was harder
D-J 4b 55 for me
D-J 4b 56 because I didn't know any thing ,
D-J 4b 57 but I hope
D-J 4b 58 to get good grades.
D-J 4b 59 I hope

D-J 4b 60 for a miracle.
D-J 4b 61 The test was
D-J 4b 62 in science.

In these fragments, Jesús reinforces his non-academic identity through exaggeration, stating hyperbolically "I don't know how to write in English" (D-J 4b 45-46), then "I didn't know any thing" (D-J 4b 56), only adding as an afterthought that science was the subject matter. By writing, "but I hope to get good grades. I hope for a miracle" (D-J 4b 57-60), he paints himself as detached from the realm of personal autonomy and accountability, especially compared to Diego's step-by-step detailing of decisions which determined his academic and career pathways. The stark differences between Jesús's self-constructed identity presentation and Diego's were not lost on Diego, who quickly changed course in his email messages, as I shall demonstrate. First, however, I think it is essential to bring in additional information to discuss how I believe the school unwittingly participated in Jesús's identity formation as non-academic.

Despite Jesús's claims in these email messages, his classroom identity is often that as a leader and facilitator of other students' understanding. In the previous school year, he had quickly gone from being a non-speaker of English to a regular translator of English for other students, and of students' Spanish for teachers. He has an extroverted personality and is willing to venture experimental phrasings in English. Moreover, unlike most other students, he describes his apartment complex as more English than Spanish-speaking (Interview, November 8, 2006). In his first year of study at NHS, when oral language proficiency takes much more precedence over reading and writing, he shone.

In his second year, as the academic reading and writing demands became higher, Jesús began to show more personal task-avoiding behaviors, all the while continuing to reinforce his status as a translator-assistant. In class, he frequently jumps to the assistance of others without asking for teacher permission or querying other students' understanding, or he is asked to facilitate classwork if the teacher needs to step out of the room. In one telling incident, as I was conversing with a student in English, Jesús overheard and ran to us, demanding that the other student speak Spanish to me because I could understand her. He often completes work at the last moment, after several reminders from a teacher, and in a rushed manner. His report card from the first half of the year showed him failing three of his nine classes, with five of the six passing grades in the low to mid-70s (borderline passing).

Valdés (1996) wrote angrily of a middle school student held back in newcomer middle school ESL classes despite more advanced language skills because she could assist the teacher in conveying instructions to new arrivals; she (correctly) decries this policy but in this case, the student held on to a pro-school identity and made a largely successful transition to regular classes. In Jesús, there is an example of a student whose oral language proficiency confers him special classroom power and privileges, even when he begins to show signs of task-avoidance and reluctance to tackle more academic demands. As other students gain in understanding and begin to outperform him academically, Jesús's power status begins to crumble, and he turns to a defensive, non-school-oriented posture. He attributes poor performance to an identity that does not account for possibilities of growth in academic performance - "I don't know a lot of

English," "I don't know how to write in English," "I didn't know anything" [on a test], and "I hope for a miracle" [to pass]. Unfortunately, it is at this historical moment in his identity formation that correspondence with Diego begins, and as I intend to show, validates his focus on a non-school identity.

Diego's second email message, unlike his first, says nothing of school, or of learning English (for which Jesús has asked Diego's help), and mentions work only tangentially. Instead, he seizes immediately on one item in Jesús's previous email and using this item, steers the conversation away from work- or school-related identities. In the attempt to connect, Diego starts with a known source of common ground, one that identifies both as consumers in a car culture:

> D-J 2a 03 Wow, you have two cars?!?!?!!
>
> D-J 2a 04 I love cars,
> D-J 2a 05 I have a Nissan Sentra
> D-J 2a 06 but I just got tires and rims
> D-J 2a 07 for it
>
> D-J 2a 08 Do you know
> D-J 2a 09 about wheels and rims?

Assuming that the information he possesses is not known to Jesús (at least in English), he proceeds with detailed instructions on how to interpret the coding system for an automobile's tires, then closes by asking Jesús to investigate this information on his own.

> D-J 2a 68 Check the tires wheels
> D-J 2a 69 on your explorer
> D-J 2a 70 and tell me
> D-J 2a 71 what they are...
> D-J 2a 72 It is written
> D-J 2a 73 on the tire itself...
> D-J 2a 74 You will see the three numbers...

Initially, I read this "assignment" as a clever method of Diego's for initiating conversation, practice, and even technical writing in English. However, when I asked Diego to reflect on his decision-making in choosing what to write, it did not appear that he was viewing his topic from a "meta" perspective as a language exercise. Rather, in the attempt to establish solidarity, he had relied on stereotypical images of young Latino males, images fueled by his perspective as a marketer of products and corresponding social identities to Latino populaces, in selecting his subject.

> So once I give him that and I tried to relate, something that we'd have in common since he had, he mentioned he had a truck, the wheels seemed like good place to go because Hispanics love wheels and then number 2 even the cars, even the most awful cars have some of the best wheels, cause Hispanics spend on wheels, and then I figured, here when I brought them and put the wheels on, everyone got excited and started talking about it and comparing so I figured maybe this is a good area for a young man, you know, because it's either sports, women, or beer. So trying to stay away from women and beer....
>
> (Interview, December 11, 2006)

In his first email, Diego had presented a series of personal choices that depict him as a highly autonomous actor, bucking certain familial, societal, and economic pressures in charting his educational and professional course; in the second, when turning his gaze to his partner, he chooses a topic that casts him, and even attempts to conscript him through an imperative request ("Check the tires wheels..."), into a stereotypical role. Even allowing for the multiplicity of identities residing within any individual, the shift is noteworthy. Diego had already presented an identity rooted in academic prestige, professional success, and global elite status. A shift to a shared identity within a more proletarian Latino cultural model comes with the foregrounded knowledge of that previous identity, and therefore, of the possibility for Diego to occupy both cultural

spheres. With the move to the proletarian, he abandons one kind of hoped-for solidarity for another, a move from a common ground of prestige and aspiration to a framing of the two as "typical" consumers in the marketplace he knows from a privileged, managerial perspective.

Diego does not find common ground within this cultural model, either. Jesús responds to the directive by stating, "This weekend I'm going to investigate my tires but first I need tell you my tires are normal" (D-J 2b 39-44). The second part of his statement obviates the need for further investigation, and the subject is dropped by both parties. Immediately preceding this statement, however, is a phrase that yields an important clue to Jesús's lack of response to the "life decision tree." He writes, "I want to know where you studied?" (D-J 2b 36-38). Though Diego had discussed three levels of academic studies – high school, undergraduate, and an MBA program - comprehension had eluded Jesús. In his second message, he had come around to ask a question about Diego's academic history (and corresponding identity). Diego's reply, sandwiched as an aside between description of a family lunch in Mexico City and the weather there, is a perfunctory, "I studied college here in Mexico, at the tec de monterrey" (D-J 3a 25-27). The offhanded approach to providing this information is further revealed in the way he generalizes the location to "in Mexico" – though he is writing from Mexico City, the university he attended is in Monterrey. And though it is risky to ascribe meaning to capitalization or the lack thereof in email correspondence (Grosvenor, 1998), the juxtaposition of the uncapitalized university name next to a capitalized "Mexico" could

demonstrate a greater attention to what he is certain is a shared affiliation, with lesser emphasis on what is not common, and therefore, not as essential, to the two.

In their face-to-face meeting, further evidence arose to suggest that Diego had positioned Jesús as one not slated for elite educational or professional status even despite Jesús's gripes about his current social status vis-à-vis his job. This evidence arose in their conversation in the face-to-face meeting about Jesús's current work as a butcher, which both recalled to me at a later time. Jesús had professed dissatisfaction with his job, stating that it was not "important," and that he preferred something "bigger... like manager, like umm... doctor or lawyer, or something like that" (Interview, February 15, 2007). At that point, Diego queried Jesús about different cuts of meat, and stated that Jesús's knowledge of the different terminologies in Mexican and American butchery was useful public knowledge, perhaps even televisable (Interview, February 15, 2007). In contrast to this justification for Jesús's finding contentment and importance in a service-sector role, Diego had earlier depicted his time as a waiter as an "odd job," writing, "When you go for your dreams, sometimes you have to take odd jobs in the process" (D-J 1a 157-160). While Diego ascribes his waiter stint as a temporary stay on a path to a higher calling, he tries to justify Jesús's remaining a butcher, offering a glimpse of media sheen to his justification, even when Jesús complains that it's not "important."

Of course, a carnivorous modern society needs its butchers, and Jesús's knowledge would no doubt be of service to the growing number of customers who cross between the worlds of Spanish and English-speaking commerce. What I find revealing and somewhat rankling in this exchange is that Jesús's lack of contentment with this role

does not become an opening for Diego to pursue even a cursory discussion of achievement. Diego had previously expressed amazement that Jesús, in the country for less than two years, already owns two cars ("Wow, you have two cars?!?!?!! (D-J 2a 03)), but instead of complimenting Jesús's drive and initiative, he instead had assumed (incorrectly) that Jesús was taking his place in a male-oriented, car-obsessed "Hispanic" culture. Jesús's lack of response to Diego's initial, discursively complex email had, in a sense, sealed his fate with Diego. And while Diego intended no harm in attempting to validate Jesús's status and identity as a service worker, set against a larger backdrop of sub-standard wages and few advancement opportunities for undocumented workers, his words diminish in validity.

Though I characterize Diego's "mentor talk" as infelicitously aligned with Jesús's situated identity, that is not to say that they did not find common ground. Indeed, in subjects as diverse as Mexican professional soccer, travel abroad, and current cinema, they achieve a banter in their communications that is humorous and convivial. This friendliness highlights the naturalness, or normalcy, of an American society that contains enormous equity differentials while it preserves a façade of egalitarianism. How to exploit that rhetoric of egalitarianism so as to combat inequity is an idea I discuss in the final chapter, as I explore possible avenues of instruction evoked by the experiences and results of this project.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I turned to the student perspective and examined how students reacted to the adults' "mentor talk," categorizing their reactions as indicative of felicitous alignment, partial alignment, or infelicitous alignment. This definition of alignment indicates the degree of correspondence between students' socially-situated identities and the discursive intent of the "mentor talk" to steer students toward a pathway to educational success and personal and economic fulfillment. In instances of felicitous alignment, the students absorbed the adult messages, either to find validation in their current efforts or to mold them to shape their own intentions. In one instance, an infelicitous alignment brought conversation about a successful future to a grinding halt, to be replaced by a conversation more focused on justifying the students' current role as a service-sector employee.

In several instances, I cited evidence of students' appropriation of their partners' language forms, and how they embraced and utilized these new language parcels in communicating their own meanings and identities. I also examined how an instance of my intervention as a "critical language awareness" facilitator prompted a student to deliver a message that was highly aligned to a discursive strategy for success, though further action on this strategy was thwarted by her undocumented resident status.

By placing the discourses enacted between the pairs along a continuum of alignment, I do not mean to imply that these discourses, and the socially-situated identities that engage them, are fixed. For these youth, who have recently relocated to new sociocultural environs, flux rather than constancy is likely the norm in how they present themselves, how they operate, and how they are allowed to operate in the wider

society. Yessica, who shied away from meeting Sara at her place of work, is now working in a retail store, vending cellphones in Spanish and English. Pablo, despite his many struggles with living in the U.S. and behaving appropriately in school, received schoolwide acclaim and an important window of opportunity by passing several of the grade-level standardized tests in English. Jesús has shown marked improvement in his grades in the second semester of the school year. And Erica, perhaps the most poised to achieve success in this society, must soon negotiate entry into a new school with a marked, tense division between high-achieving and disaffected youth that falls largely along racial, cutural lines.

Of this I am certain – these youth will continue to find the discourses behind "mentor talk" repeatedly as they stake their claims in this society. In that sense, this project can be viewed as an opportunity for them to voice express reactions to these maxims of American life, and in doing so, to give voice to their own socially-situated identities. For these youth, isolated at home and at school, underappreciated for their expressive written skills in English or Spanish, this was a new experience.

Chapter Six – Analyzing One Pair's Exchanges In Full

INTRODUCTION

In the previous two chapters, I presented the results of the analysis of five sets of email exchanges between Latino business professionals and newcomer Latino high school students. I took an aggregate view of the data set as I sought to identify and explicate socially-situated identities, discourses, and ideological orientations that arose within and across messages between adults and students (Gee, 1999, 2004b).

In this chapter, I will present the language and accompanying analysis of one set of these exchanges, between Maricruz, a 17 year old girl at Newcomer HS and Anne, her 46 year old female partner. Several issues prompt the revisiting of this data under a solitary spotlight. First is my concern that the presentation of data in the previous chapters does not do full justice to the diachronous and intersubjective nature in which social identities, discourses, and ideologies are constructed, refined, shared, contested, or ignored as communication proceeds (Bakhtin, 1981; Gutierrez *et al*., 1995; Prior, 2001). In a similar vein, I wish for the reader to see, in minute detail, the gradual development of one student's language as she gained skill, knowledge, and confidence in composing email messages to her partner; given my contention that these email exchanges represent a break from classroom-based discursive norms, this close attention to one student's language also permits a conversation to take place about the project's relative merits as a vehicle for student language acquisition.

Presentation of one data set in its entirety is also intended as a response to one of the chief criticisms of critical discourse analysis, namely, that the researcher's overt political agenda and privileged stance as keeper of the data act as constraining forces on analysis, undermining the emancipatory intent of the research project (Macbeth, 2003; Shugart, 2003). In typical presentations of critical discourse analysis findings (such as in the previous chapters), fragments of text are selected to serve as emblematic of larger themes, but then, as Macbeth writes, "the analysis is not then necessarily sequential, nor constitutively ethnographic" (2003, p 253). This raises the trustworthiness issue that the author's selections merely ratify and reify the author's political project, a noteworthy accusation considering critical discourse analysis's distrust of taken-for-granted assumptions in society (Rogers *et al.*, 2005). Because of the relatively short length of the email exchanges between Maricruz and Anne, and because of the reduced context of email messages (as compared to say, face-to-face conversation), an opportunity is afforded here to present a data set in full view, and to provide a running microanalysis of the language. In a sense, I have returned to the second stage in my data analysis (See Chapter Three) to examine step-by-step how one pair's conversation unfolds. It is hoped that such a presentation will lend credence to the previous chapters' findings as well as highlight the diachronous, dialogic nature of identity work, discourse construction, and language acquisition.

Because I have taken pains to respond to the issues of fragment selection, I also wish to provide a rationale for the selection of this set of paired exchanges. The language that circulates between the two partners touches upon themes already raised, including

the ideological alignment of "mentor talk" with hegemonizing discourses, a student's own sociocultural alignment with the performative intent of "mentor talk," and the appropriation of language. The analysis that follows reveals more completely one adult's uniquely held ideological stance toward immigrant youth as well as one student's strategic responses to discourses that promote the continued marginalization and subjugation of young immigrants.

In constructing her responses to Anne, Maricruz relies consistently on appropriation of Anne's language, yet shifts that language in ways that continue to affirm her own sociocultural identity and to offer rejoinders to Anne's cultural assumptions. I contend that through the course of the email exchanges, not only did her written language skills become more sophisticated, but along with that sophistication came a more fully expressed sociocultural identity and ideological orientation.

Nevertheless, I do not wish to paint a naive picture of a valiant struggle to overcome adversity, or of a triumphant pedagogical innovation; in my judgment, this is a student-adult communication that should not continue because unwelcoming discourses threaten to engulf this student's optimism and promise. As a result, this case helped me to complexify my vision of a Latino business professional and immigrant; even though such a person may project a pro-Latino, pro-immigrant orientation, careful attention to the kinds of discourses being evoked and the situated meanings of words like "immigrant" and "educated" reveals a more nuanced and sometimes contradictory attitude.

In order to present the email messages as reader-friendly and easily accessible, I placed the text in a two-column format and removed the reference system I used for prior

analysis. Furthermore, in order to recast the texts as parts of a co-constructed, dialogic continuum, I numbered all lines sequentially throughout the exchanges and across the pair. In other words, if the adult's first message ends on line 52, the student's first response starts on line 53, etc.

INTRODUCING THE PARTNERS: ANNE AND MARICRUZ

The mentor, Anne, is a 46 year old female born to a Mexican national father and a Canadian national mother. Resisting simple ethnic or country-of-origin modifiers, she indicates her heritage as "Mexican," "Latin-American," "Nordic," "Scandinavian," "Spanish," "French," and "Caucasian born in Mexico" (Interview, November 14, 2006). She was raised primarily in Mexico City but had short stints as a child living in Boston and Montreal. She attended private schools and university in Mexico City. She has been permanently in the United States since 1990 and is married to an American.

Anne worked in the past for the Mexican Foreign Service in the United States helping recent immigrant families adjust to American cultural norms and rules. Recently, she fulfilled a longtime ambition of obtaining her Ph.D. in Business Administration (in the U.S.) and now serves as a professor for a local M.B.A. program that relies heavily on Internet-based media for course materials and communication. Working primarily from home, Anne uses email daily in both English and Spanish for work and personal communication. She does not send text messages via a cellphone or PDA.

Though Anne is easily described as a fluent, confident speaker and writer of English, her oral and written communications in English do carry some traces of Spanish grammar and syntax. Most notably, in her email messages she periodically elides the

subject noun of sentences, as she would in Spanish since the verb carries the subject noun marker.

Maricruz recently turned 17; born in the state of Guerrero, Mexico, she has been in the United States for nearly two years. Her father has been in this country for 11 years and her mother joined him five years ago. With the departure of her mother, Maricruz and her younger brother were cared for by her grandmother until her parents could bring them over. Maricruz has an older married sister in a separate home and an older brother who lives at home, as well as extended family in the urban area.

Unlike many NHS students, particularly those in their second year, Maricruz does not hold a job outside of school. In school, she tends to be quiet and diligent in her studies; she has long, straight black hair that she tends to "hide behind." Though she rarely volunteers information in class, when called on by a teacher, she provides responses that are usually correct and often well-reasoned in their judgment. Words of praise from a teacher will elicit a slight smile. Maricruz's course grades hover in the 80-to-90 range but perhaps due to her shyness, teachers rate her as "Beginning" in her oral and written language performance.

Maricruz has several close friends, including a male student who left NHS during the school year to attend his "regular" high school. Though she does not own her own cellphone, she occasionally uses a friend's to send text messages, often in English. Her family owns a computer but it does not have Internet access; Maricruz uses it primarily to complete work assignments for her Business Computer Information Systems class. This project provided her first email account.

EXCHANGE #1: INITIAL IDENTITY WORK

From: Anne
Date: Oct 12, 2006 11:15 AM
Subject: hello

Hello Maricruz,

Since we are embarking
on this journey together
and in the hope
we can be good pen (email) pals

let me tell you a little
about myself.

I was born
and raised in Mexico City, Mexico.

As a small child
I did live some years
in Montreal, Canada
and in Boston, Massachusetts.
My mother is Canadian
(my father is Mexican)
so while Spanish is my first language,
I grew up
speaking English too.

Living in Boston
was particularly difficult
for me.
I was taunted
by other children
for speaking a second language
and because the customs and values

my parents were giving me
were from the Mexican culture
and different
in some ways
from the American culture.
I loved living
in Mexico City!
I found people
that actually wanted to be my friends
in Mexico
much nicer and tolerant.
It was actually cool
to be different!

All throughout high school and university
in Mexico,
I saw that
being different was good.

Speaking another language
allowed me
to communicate
with more people.
It allowed me
to enter another culture
and learn
about the people.
I could read more books.
I don't necessarily have to agree

to everything
but I learned
to be tolerant and understanding,

and how to be true
to my values.
I also realized then,
thinking back
that the children
in Boston
were just prejudiced and narrow-minded
and I certainly never wanted
to treat anybody
the way I was treated.

As an adult,
I take those lessons very seriously;

Looking to help people
when they have difficulty
because of the language or culture.

Being nice and non-judgmental
in general
to everyone.
Smiling or bowing
depending on the culture;
You'd be surprised
on how this always breaks the ice

with strangers.
I also decided
I needed to broaden my horizon

84 on cultures
85 and have been fortunate
86 to have traveled much.
87 I finally was seeing
88 in real life
89 stuff that was only
90 in my history books,
91 or in the newspaper.
92 Wow!
93 I learned
94 about other cultures
95 and still do
96 every time I travel.
97 I have friends
98 from different countries and cultures.

99 With my background,
100 I decided
101 on a job
102 that allowed me
103 to be
104 in contact
105 with many cultures, people
106 and allowed me
107 to speak other languages.
108 So I chose
109 to work
110 in the area
111 of international business.

112 What was growing up
113 for you
114 like?
115 Were you born here
116 in the US
117 or from somewhere else?
118 Tell me
119 about yourself.

120 I look forward
121 to your response.
122 Have a great weekend!
123 Anne (electronic signature)

In this initial message, Anne provides an opening salutation, then walks Maricruz quickly through her upbringing, indicating important formative experiences that have shaped her current sociocultural identity. Before closing, she turns her address to Maricruz, asking two questions (lines 112-117) and soliciting additional information through a polite imperative (118-119). Taking her language at face value, Anne presents a social identity that is transnational, multilingual, "tolerant and understanding" (58), learned in a book sense as well as in a well-traveled sense, and interested in helping others, especially those who "have difficulty because of the language or culture" (72-73). Her desire to work in a field that embraced this identity resulted in her current career in international business education.

Probing more deeply, a picture begins to emerge of a particular kind of transnational identity. The opening sentence, as parsed in the following table (Fig. 8), includes rhetorical tactics and several metaphors that invite examination. Its syntax alone yields some clues to the situated identity of the person behind it:

Figure 8: Analysis of Anne's Opening Statement

1	Subordinate clause	**Since we are embarking**
2	Prepositional phrase	**on this journey together**
3	Prepositional phrase	**and in the hope**
4	Embedded clause within the prepositional phrase	**[that] we can be good pen (email) pals**
5	Polite imperative	**let me tell you a little about myself**

The first four lines contain two subordinate clauses; as rhetorical embellishments, they delay Anne's first direct words to Maricruz. Line 5, a polite imperative, keeps Anne in the foreground as the object of interest. Taken together, this opening suggests the discursive style of a formal letter in Spanish or in English, of one "person of letters" addressing another formally while attempting to establish a tentative solidarity. Nostalgia and a sense of romance are reinforced by the nautical metaphor of the two "embarking on a journey" together; contrast this, for instance, with the effect of using a more current metaphor such as "traveling on the information superhighway." Departing from the metaphor, she does not ascribe to their communications an immediate relationship, just an expressed "hope" for one. Contributing to the antiquated effect of the metaphor is the

invocation of the term "pen pal;" in fact, she subordinates the more accurate description of an "email pal" to parentheses. Not surprisingly, because this is a new experience, Anne looks back in her cultural repertoire to pen pals experiences as a youth, using language that evokes for her an ideal cultural model of communication—sophisticated and elegant, with a balance of formality and a hint of future intimacy.

After presenting some factual information about where she was born and has lived, Anne's characterization of her time in Boston compared to her reception in Mexico City affords clues to her cultural model of transnationalism. In Boston, she was "taunted" (25) not only because of her second language (in the U.S., her native language is demoted to second-place status), but because the "customs and values," (28) two generic yet morally-laden concepts, were misunderstood. Anne was mistreated by the Boston youth because of things not under her perceived control-- she had not chosen her language, customs, or values, but had been "given" them by her parents (29). Those "customs and values," once the fodder for cruelty, she now identifies as essential personal virtues and strives to remain "true" to them (59-60).

In lines 34-37, the passive stance of the victim yields to the more active and emphatic statements "I loved living in Mexico City!" (34-35) and "I found people that actually wanted to be my friends" (36-37). She concludes the paragraph with the more colloquial and existentially descriptive statements "It was actually cool to be different!... I saw that being different was good" (40-45). In this paragraph, she has made a passage from victimhood to a more relaxed expression of revelation and personal agency, a journey that lends conviction and backbone to the social identity she ascribes herself.

Lending credence to the conclusion that being "different" can be "good" is the unique context that she encountered living among the cosmopolitan elite of Mexico City, a society heavily influenced by Spanish colonialism and various waves of European immigration (Lomnitz & Pérez-Lizaur, 1987). The qualities that make her "different" are often taken as virtues in a Euro-centric society – her ability to speak English and her fair complexion. Her particular sociocultural setting among the elite of Mexico City, and within a Western-oriented elite society in general, affords her the space to frame her differences as positives. This stands in marked contrast to the obstacles that ethnic, linguistic, and economic subordinate groups face within the same societies in their (re)claiming "otherness" attributes from pejorative connotations (Anzaldúa, 1987; duBois, 1903/1953; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001).

Taken together, the journey from "other" negative experiences in Boston to now-positive "other" experiences in Mexico City endowed her sociocultural identity with clarity and moral rectitude. She learned to be "tolerant and understanding" (58) and strives to remain "true" to these "values" (59-60). From this perspective, she is able to dismiss, and presumably, to forgive the children of Boston as being "just prejudiced and narrow-minded" (65); her self-characterization now stands as a moral rejoinder to the Boston youth. The invocation of a universal Golden Rule ("I certainly never wanted to treat anybody the way I was treated") acts as a closing epigram to the Boston experience and as a marker of her cosmopolitan outlook (Appiah, 2006). Unlike the Christian Golden Rule, which appears often as a command ("Do unto others...") (Mathew 7:12),

Anne's phrasing highlights the wrongs committed against her ("the way I was treated") while emphasizing her own distance from culpability ("certainly never").

Continuing along this same theme of moral certainty, Anne depicts her actions in the adult world vis-à-vis others not as particular instances, but in gerund form, as continuous deeds or maxims that reflect and act positively on her as she carries them out: "Speaking another language allowed me to communicate with more people" (46-49); "Being nice and non-judgmental in general to everyone" (74-75); "Smiling or bowing depending on the culture... breaks the ice with strangers" (77-81). Her prior, personal multicultural experiences have provided her insights that gain her successful entrance into different cultural worlds. Thus it is within a discourse of clarity and conviction that Anne frames her sociocultural identity.

Reminiscent of Diego's account of career pursuits, Anne's career choice of international business education supports her interests in language, culture, and travel and accrues her benefits, "allowing" (102, 106) her to "broaden [her] horizon" (83). In interviews, she indicated the struggles she found in her previous position in the Mexican Foreign Service helping recent, mostly poor Mexican immigrants adjust to cultural life in the United States (Interview, November 13, 2006). I assume that her current profession also allows her continued contact with global business elites who, across languages and cultures, share much in common with her sociocultural identity (Iyer, 2000; Reich, 1992; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001).

In the closing, Anne sets up her own letter as an exemplar for Maricruz, framing her questions as a request for Maricruz to provide the same kinds of information that she

has provided and to participate in a particular kind of discourse. Starting in line 112, Anne shifts her address, arguably for the first time, to Maricruz. She provides an open-ended question ("What was growing up for you like?") (112-114); a yes-no question ("Were you born in the US or [sic] from somewhere else?") (115-117); and a polite imperative ("Tell me about yourself") (118-119). The two questions mimic Anne's account of her life, which included in addition to factual details (yes-no information) an account of a traumatic childhood experience in the U.S. and a description of her moral outlook (more interpretive and intimate information). In the polite imperative, Anne echoes the conclusion to the first paragraph ("let me tell you a little about myself") (09).

Given these high expectations, it was not surprising that Maricruz's first response disappointed Anne. In the mid-point interview, Anne stated, "Initially, I was taken aback because I wrote this really long detailed email then got back such a short little thing" (Interview, November 14, 2006). She expressed disappointment that she had been asked to "pour [her] heart out and then to get that type of response." (Interview, November 14, 2006).

124 Date Oct 19, 2006 1:21 PM
125 Subject Re: hello

126 Dear Anne,

127 Hello! how are you !
128 I am your new friend today
129 I could tell you
130 about myself
131 and my life.

132 I am
133 from Mexico,Guerrero Mexico.
134 My mother is Mexican
135 and my father too
136 but,my parents they came
137 to America
138 (my father 11 years ago
139 and my mother 5 years ago)
140 and I was
141 in Mexico
142 with my grandparents.
143 After I came too
144 and I am
145 with my parents and my brother.

146 I like these country

147 because i am learning different thinks
148 for example
149 to talk the English.
150 Have a good weekend.
151 Sincerely,
152 Maricruz

Looking at Maricruz's language analytically yields some clues to her sociocultural identity as well as attempts she makes to respond to Anne's requests and to replicate Anne's discursive style. Maricruz composes an initial, introductory paragraph, but instead of a complex opening, Maricruz uses a much more direct phrase (often heard as, "Hellohowareyou" by new learners of English) without a capitalization on the second sentence and with an exclamation rather than a question mark. Rather than taking up the "pen pal" motif, Maricruz uses the simpler "friend." She does attempt, however, to use stylized language by saying "could" instead of "can" for "I could tell you…"[10] Moreover, in responding to "Tell me about yourself," she does tag on "and my life" (06) as a brief extension to the appropriated phrase.

Maricruz answers Anne's second question at first simply, "I am from Mexico," then, by adding the detail "Guerrero Mexico" (132-133), echoes Anne's place references ("Mexico City, Mexico;" "Boston, Massachusetts;" "Montreal, Canada"). She repeats Anne's constructions that talk about her parents, taking care to emphasize that unlike Anne's case, both her parents are Mexican (134-135). Her use of both "but" and a comma call attention to a important element in her personal narrative that departs from

[10] I have interpreted Maricruz's "could" as an attempt at a stylistic flourish. Another way to read "could" is as a modal verb which reduces the strength of Maricruz's commitment to talking about her life from "can" to "could" (Fairclough, 2003). In other words, Maricruz is not yet comfortable or confident laying bare the story of her life. Future emails do indicate that she does withhold important information about her life, such as her undocumented resident status, making the modal interpretation tantalizing. Nevertheless, given the verb usage and variation that she employs throughout her writing, both in the emails and in class, I prefer the reading presented above.

Anne's storyline – the separation from her parents (136). (In subsequent emails, commas continue to appear after the conjunction as it does here, though she also begins to display more standard comma usage.) As Anne had done in her email, Maricruz shifts from a brief walk through personal history to arrive at a present state; she effects this shift by moving in a single sentence from simple past tense "After I came too" to present tense "and I am" (143-144).

In her next paragraph, Maricruz provides some judgment on her presence here ("I like these country") along with a justifying statement "because i am learning different thinks" that is further bolstered by a concrete example "for example to talk the English" 146-149). This too echoes Anne's reflection on experiences that have shaped her current identity and orientation. Maricruz has not taken up Anne's call to join her in a stylized, literary adventure; instead, given the opportunity (in fact, the first opportunity), she frames an argument for why she is in this country and presents her commitment to the project of studying English. This sociocultural identity, of which Maricruz only provides a skeletal version here, is a theme she shall return to and embellish in subsequent emails with remarkable consistency.

Notwithstanding Anne's disappointment with a terse response, Maricruz did provide some indication of a young *Mexicana* recently reunited with her parents after a very long separation, happy to be learning in this country, and accepting of the notion of a "new friend." In a straightforward way Maricruz had addressed all of her questions, though Maricruz's sense of a "complete" message stands in vivid contrast to Anne's composition. To be fair to Maricruz, at the start of the project, I had stressed to the

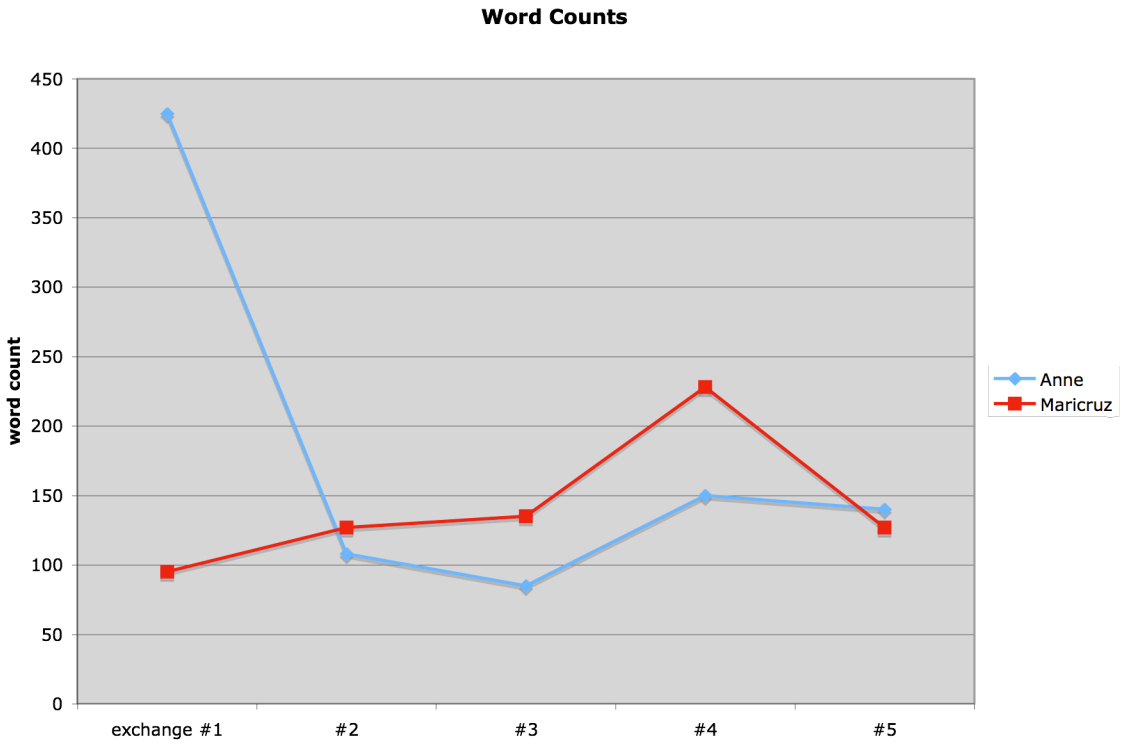
students that questions from the mentors were to be given priority, that "business people" expected their questions to be answered promptly. My instructions to the class may have cast a procedural spin to message composition that Maricruz, as an abiding student, complied with. Even if compliance with instructions were a priority for Maricruz, there are indications that Maricruz is paying attention not solely to Anne's questions but to the organization and discursive style of the first message. In the conclusion, Maricruz mirrors the language of Anne's closing "Have a good weekend" (albeit without the exclamation), and signed off (150). (Her closing, "Sincerely, Maricruz" was the standard signoff I provided to the entire class.)

EXCHANGE #2: WITHDRAWAL/APPROPRIATION

Anne's response to Maricruz's first email presents a considerable drop in word count and in narrative content. From this point forward, the length of Anne's messages remained at or below Maricruz's production level (See Fig. 9). The reduction comes primarily at the expense of narrative content about her life. It signifies Anne's reduced interest in establishing an intimate rapport with Maricruz and participating in a co-constructed dialogue. Instead, this move positions Anne in a privileged role as one who extracts personal information from another without a like commitment. It certainly indicates a reduced corpus from which Maricruz can borrow language and ideas. However, as shall be seen, the reduction may have also opened space in this communication for Maricruz to assert her own sociocultural identity without an overweening influence from the language of Anne. Additionally, the change in Anne's

writing strategy paves the way for their communications to more closely resemble the oral conversational qualities of email and less the standardized characteristics of handwritten correspondence (Grosvenor, 1998; Sotillo, 2000). In other words, Anne's retreat from her initial cultural model of literary text production allowed Maricruz to make better use of the hybrid space of email to describe her own sociocultural identity and cultural priorities (Grosvenor, 1998; Gutierrez *et al.*, 1995; Lam, 2000).

Figure 9: Comparison of Anne's and Maricruz's Word Counts



153 date Oct 24, 2006 1:50 PM
154 subject RE: hello

155 Hi Maricruz,

156 Thank you
157 for your sweet email.

158 Tell me
159 how long have you been
160 in Austin?
161 Do you get
162 to visit your grandparents
163 in Mexico often

164 or do they come visit you here?
165 You are lucky
166 to still have grandparents,
167 mine have died.

168 Do you like school?
169 What is your favorite subject?
170 Are you assigned much homework
171 in the afternoons?

172 You sound like
173 are enjoy learning new things;
174 as you continue
175 to practice,
176 your English will continue
177 to improve.
178 What else besides English
179 are you learning?
180 Do you practice your English
181 at home?

182 Have a fun weekend,
183 and I look forward to
184 receiving your next email!

185 Anne

After thanking Maricruz for her email in a straightforward opening sentence, the only word of embellishment being a mild "sweet" (157), Anne begins a string of questions interrupted by one evaluative/biographical statement ("You are lucky to still have grandparents, mine have died.") (165-167). Though Anne later recalled her intent to make the questions "short" and "easy," in syntax they are not straightforward to the second language learner (Interview, November 8, 2006). The first question comes as a present perfect verb embedded within the imperative "Tell me…" (158). This non-essential imperative mimics the opening to a face-to-face discussion, but it also emphasizes Anne's continued control of the subject matter. The second question, "Do you get to visit…" (161) could be expressed more simply, "Do you visit…"; similarly, the second part of the two-prong question "or do they come visit" (164) could have been written "or do they visit."

Despite Anne's later questioning of Maricruz's ability to comprehend all of her questions ("I think... she's struggling for comprehension"), Maricruz did respond to all questions asked in this email and in all messages from Anne (Interview, November 13, 2006). I conclude from the analysis of this chunk of Anne's text that even when the adult

attempted to simplify language to a very basic level, she still included a variety of syntactical structures in close proximity that would not likely appear in similar fashion in a basic ESL text. Simplified language in email discourse is still prone to include the kind of variation and unpredictability seen in oral discourse, albeit in printed form (Grosvenor, 1998; Sotillo, 2000; Toyoda & Harrison, 2002). As such, the language of emails can serve as a more authentic model of language-in-use than the tightly controlled language of standard ESL textbooks, workbooks, and readers (Gee, 1990).

The two-prong question "Do you get to visit your grandparents in Mexico often or do they come visit you here?" merits further attention (161-164). For Anne, crossing the border is a relatively easy experience that can occur "often" because she holds the passports and/or residencies that allow her to live in both countries. She asks this question from the perspective of a transnational border-crosser, a "chameleon," a term she used to refer to the ability to operate in different social settings on both sides of the border (Interview, November 14, 2006). Maricruz, on the other hand, given her undocumented residency status, cannot make the border crossing nearly as easily, and more likely than not, her grandparents would not be able to secure visas to visit her in this country. In my preparatory conversations with all adult participants, nearly all adults asked about the residency status of the students, and in those conversations with adults who did not ask, I made a point of telling them that as a policy, we generally did not ask students about their residency status, but it could be assumed that the vast majority were in this country without long-term residency visas or U.S. citizenship. The question about grandparents and the statement that she is "lucky" indicates that Elizabeth has not

grasped fundamental limitations on Maricruz's ability to move freely as a transnational citizen.

In the next paragraph, Anne writes, "You sound like are [sic] enjoy learning new things... What else besides English are you learning?" (172-179) Maricruz did not mention this omission/incomplete verb tense in our in-class readings of the email and I did not catch it until after several close readings of the passage; as in Spanish, the subject of the verb can be inferred from the form of the verb. Despite the hiccup in this statement, Maricruz understands and appropriates Anne's language in responding, "I can be learning many things" (206-207); she moves beyond exact replication of Anne's language to place the action in the present continuous and has added the modal "can," indicating her personal commitment to the project (Fairclough, 2003).

This exchange lends validity to Anne's statement, "as you continue to practice, your English will continue to improve" (174-176), but it also reinforces another important idea – that Anne's English, even in nonstandard form, serves its purpose in communicating thoughts to Maricruz, and that Maricruz can use Anne's language as a jumping-off point for her own creative constructions.

Anne, who in her first email espoused a general pro-learning ideology, here takes Maricruz's cues about school to delve into specific questions about Maricruz's school life:

> Do you like school?
> What is your favorite subject?
> Are you assigned much homework
> in the afternoons? (168-171)
>
> What else besides English
> are you learning?

Do you practice your English
at home? (178-181)

Here, Anne is relying upon her own cultural understandings of school (that school includes subjects including but not limited to English, and homework, and that it takes place during the morning hours) to demonstrate at least a passing interest in details of Maricruz's schooling life. The last question in this series, which is the last in the email, abruptly shifts the footing back to Anne's original pro-learning stance and issues a challenge; it seems to beg a "yes" response so as to build solidarity around the idea that learning extends beyond prescribed homework and continues at home, especially in a project that Maricruz has identified as important. Contrarily, a "no" would indicate a discrepancy between Maricruz's cultural model of learning and Anne's. Indeed, such a discrepancy does exist, though it does not become fully revealed in this exchange.

Before turning to Maricruz's reply, I wish to identify one more item in Anne's cultural model that at first seems inconsequential: she wishes Maricruz a "fun weekend" (182). For many at NHS, the weekends do not represent fun in the usual sense of leisure time and freedom from the structures of school. True, many students do come back to NHS on Mondays talking of parties, video games and movies, visits to the mall, or family events. But for many, fun may come in the form of cash in the pocket after several days of work at a weekend flea market, in a restaurant kitchen, or on a construction site. It may come as a byproduct of looking after siblings while parents continue to work at their jobs. For a sizeable number, however, weekends also represent tedium and confinement in an apartment while parents are away. For nearly all students, weekends represent a

near-total break from written or spoken English. Even though Maricruz will answer "yes" to the question about practicing at home, her ability to practice in an authentic sense is greatly constrained by the linguistic isolation that she and most of her classmates experience from a wider English-dominant society.

In a reversal of composition length, Maricruz's response to Anne's email is longer than Anne's message and includes considerably more personal information. Throughout the email, Maricruz appropriates Anne's language as she replies to her questions:

186 Date Nov 2, 2006 3:02 PM
187 subject Re: hello
188 Dear Anne,
189 Hello! how are you.
190 I not get
191 to visit
192 to my grandparents
193 in Mexico
194 and they too not come visit here
195 because my parents do not want to go
196 because I am student
197 the High School
198 and not can be go
199 Mexico.
200 I have in Austin one year
201 I live with my parents and my two brothers.
202 I like
203 to live
204 in Austin
205 and too I like the school.
206 I can be
207 learning many things
208 and sometimes I have many homework
209 but, how are different class.
210 I have time for
211 to do,
212 I only
213 I learning English
214 and sometimes practice the English
215 in my home
216 with my brothers.
217 That you have good day
218 and good weekend .
219 I wait for your next mail
220 Sincerely,
221 Maricruz

Maricruz opens with the same phrase that she used in the first email, substituting a period for an exclamation point in the second sentence. She has not yet arrived at the point of seeing this sentence as independent from the first or as an interrogative; that will

have to wait for the third exchange, where a full understanding of the greeting procedure will be demonstrated in the phrase, "Hi! How are you?" (256).

In answering Anne's question about travel across the border for her and for her grandparents, Maricruz replicates both the "get to visit" (190-191) and "come visit here" (194) verbal constructions of Anne's message. The contents of the response can be interpreted in two ways. The first way is to accept that Maricruz's parents do not want her to take a trip to Mexico while she is in school; this would leave open the possibility for a trip during a vacation period or upon graduation. Such an interpretation would bolster a school-oriented identity for Maricruz's parents. Given Maricruz's previous positive statements about school life and learning, a fuller social identity of Maricruz emerges as a serious student who receives parental support and guidance.

Another interpretation, one that takes into account Maricruz's immigration status, builds the image of an arguably stronger school-oriented social identity because it infers the personal and familial sacrifices incurred in providing such an identity for Maricruz. Maricruz is in this country as an undocumented student; in all likelihood, her family paid a significant sum of money and placed her under considerable risk to bring her here and enroll her as an American high school student. In addition to a re-separation from her parents and siblings, a return to Mexico would entail a loss of that identity and of the investment made in creating it. The phrase "I am student the High School and not can be go Mexico" implies the strength of the identity and the risk of leaving the country – she <u>is</u> a high school student and traveling across the border risks putting an end to that identity.

This interpretation also accounts for why Maricruz posits several reasons why she cannot go to Mexico and yet simply states about her grandparents, "they too not come visit here" (194). If she and her family are here "without papers," it will be virtually impossible for her grandparents to secure a tourist visa to visit them, let alone residency permits to stay for a longer period of time.

Unlike several other students, Maricruz does not reveal her undocumented resident status to her email partner; she later informed me in a conversation about her plans for higher education (Interview, November 8, 2006). She is strategic, however, about what she does choose to reveal. Without prevaricating, she appropriates the words of Anne in presenting a socially acceptable, school-oriented version of her reasons for not traveling. While she answers Anne's question about her grandparents, she does not provide the same sorts of justifications that she ascribes herself; in fact, she quickly (and I think, cleverly) shifts the focus back to herself in giving her reasons.

Perhaps the moral "high ground" of Anne's first email gave Maricruz reason to be cautious about revealing her immigration status, or perhaps, like many students, Maricruz was instructed by her family members to be circumspect when discussing her status with others. My later interviews with Anne revealed that Maricruz had good reason for this caution, as Anne decried what she perceived as a lack of motivation among Maricruz's peer group at NHS:

> I wasn't seeing that stimuli, to say that I can do better for myself and learn, bring something different to my family, to me, that's immigrants, because they're certainly not the first immigrants to this country, and they have so much in front of them at their disposition that you and I never had, so it was kind of sad to see that they weren't taking advantage... (Interview, February 21, 2007)

Though Anne never explicitly connects undocumented status with her dismay about the current generation of immigrants, she does invoke a strong and persistent storyline about immigration to the United States – that previous generations had a hardworking, can-do spirit that allowed them to learn English, prosper economically, and benefit the country in ways that set them apart from this generation of immigrants (Olneck, 2004; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001). It is not a stretch to imagine that Maricruz's undocumented status would have added fuel to the fire of this morality tale. So whether Maricruz's guard against telling her full story came from an internal reluctance or advice from others, her silence as well as her persistence in relating her version of a sociocultural identity serve as a bulwark of resistance against a much larger pejorative discourse.

As Maricruz continues to answer Anne's string of questions, a pattern emerges in her responses. In each answer, Maricruz provides the most basic information to satisfy the question but in each (with the notable exception of the answer about the grandparents), she goes one step further to provide an additional piece of information, be it biographical or evaluative in nature. This is fairly straightforward evidence of language appropriation, of her taking on Anne's words, including the ideologically-tinged discourses that surround those words, but reshaping them to fashion a performance of her own sociocultural identity (Bakhtin, 1981; Menard-Warwick, 2005; Moraes, 1996; Prior, 2001). It is also an example of language scaffolding at work, of an incremental adjustment and expansion of her expressive language capabilities based upon a model she has been provided and upon her own expressive capabilities (Moll, 1990).

To cite examples, Maricruz responds to Anne's question/imperative "Tell me how long you have been in Austin?" (158-160) with the reply

> I have in Austin one year
> I live with my parents and my two brothers ( )

In the next reply, this one to the question, "Do you like school?" (168), Maricruz inverts the answer-additional information order by writing

> I like to live in Austin
> and I too like the school ( ).

By providing the evaluative information first, she bridges more effectively from the previous statement; this order along with the "too" also achieves more emphasis on the latter phrase, which is directly related to her project of constructing her pro-school identity.

In the next section of the email, Maricruz answers Anne's questions about school and learning. She also gives important clues to her identity as a learner of English:

> I can be
> learning many things
> and sometimes I have many homework
> but, how are different class.
> I have time for
> to do,
> I only
> I learning English
> and sometimes practice the English
> in my home
> with my brothers. (206-216)

Previously, I have described how Maricruz has filled in Anne's ambiguous verb construction, adding the modal "can" to indicate her commitment to learning. "I can be learning many things" (206-207) is in response to question of "what else besides English" (178) she is learning. The meaning of "and sometimes I have many homework but, how are different class" (208-209) is unclear; I interpret it as "and sometimes I have a lot of

homework but for different classes." Having provided information about other classes, she then launches a clarifying statement ("I have time for to do") but then halts that clarification with a restatement ("I only I learning English…") (210-213). I read the halting phrasing in this section as an indication of the importance Maricruz is placing on getting the point across that despite any homework she may receive, learning English remains her utmost priority.

In responding to the challenge of whether she practices English at home, Maricruz answers, "sometimes... with my brothers" (214-216). Absent is any mention of home-based literacy practices. That lack, as well as what could be read as a lackluster attempt to work on her English outside of school, become future points of criticism that Anne holds for Maricruz.

"That you have a good day and a good weekend" (217-218) I read as a word-by-word translation of the Spanish *"Que tengas un buen día y un buen fin de semana.*[11]*"* This is followed by an (indented), "I wait for your next mail" (219). Together, these two statements serve as evidence of Maricruz's mind at work appropriating the language of Anne, whose previous closing sentence was "Have a fun weekend, and I look forward to receiving your next email!" (182-184) and fitting it into known schemata of language. Some of these forms come directly from the Spanish ("That you have…"), some utilize unique English constructions ("I wait for…"), and some befit both languages (indenting a new paragraph or the area around the closing of a letter). These closing sentences of Maricruz's email provide a microcosmic glimpse of the numerous resources that

[11] I would translate this into English as, "May you have a good day and a good weekend."

Maricruz summons in her quest to participate in written communication with Anne. They serve as vivid reminders that language construction is complex, and laden with choices, but also entirely feasible for a relative newcomer to the English language.

EXCHANGE #3: FROM "PEN PALS" TO "EMAIL PALS"

Anne's next email, her response to Maricruz, is even briefer than her last one, at 85 words.

222 Date Nov 6, 2006 3:57 PM
223 subject RE: hello

224 Hi Maricruz!

225 Thank you
226 for your email.
227 I am glad
228 you like school;
229 I always enjoyed it too.
230 You seem
231 be
232 doing very well
233 in learning English-
234 I know
235 from my experience
236 it is not an easy language
237 to learn.
238 As you continue
239 to practice
240 speaking
241 and writing
242 you will get better each day.

243 Do you have any hobby's?
244 Special activities
245 you enjoy?
246 For example,
247 I enjoy reading,
248 playing with my dog
249 and going to museums.

250 Look forward to your next email.

251 Your friend,

252 Anne

Anne opens by expressing solidarity with Maricruz's pro-school orientation and evaluating that information based upon her own experiences (227-229). The line "You seem [sic] be doing well in learning English" (230-233) indicates a partial commitment to the idea that Maricruz is progressing in her English, an ambivalence confirmed in the interview one week later when she expressed surprise at Maricruz's limited written English abilities. Nevertheless, Anne attempts to bolster a half-hearted commendation by remarking on the difficulty of learning English. In this attempt, though she references her

own experience, Anne resists attributing the difficulty as a (shared) personal trait. Rather, she attributes the difficulty to the language itself, stating with conviction, "I know…it is not an easy language" (234-237). This characterization of English is of course a common theme among students of English as a non-native language, as is the piece of advice that follows (238-242). While each statement has its own merits, they both fit in within the larger rhetoric of education as a colorblind meritocracy critiqued in Chapters One and Two. The unspoken text of this rhetoric is that even though English is indeed difficult, the best students find a way to achieve fluency through constant practice. Nowhere is mentioned questions of what kind(s) of English students are provided access to, nor the forms and venues of practice that will provide the best opportunities for formal and informal success.

In the next paragraph, Anne shifts away from a discussion of school and language learning to ask the sole questions of the email. She writes:

> Do you have any hobby's?
> Special activities
> you enjoy?
> For example,
> I enjoy reading,
> playing with my dog
> and going to museums. (243-249)

The topic of the questions is reinforced by the relaxed attention to formatting (possessive hobby's instead of hobbies; an elided "Do you have" in the second sentence). Two of the three activities are of course linked to notions of literacy, but also to particular notions of cultural literacy (Johnstone, 2002). Positioning reading and going to museums alongside playing with a dog indicates that for Anne, these two activities are a kind of play. The

notion of reading as play was further reinforced by Anne's fascination with non-fiction books about chocolate – not cookbooks but histories of chocolate (Interview, February 21, 2007). This pursuit of esoterica marks Anne as a person who seeks information about her world not solely for work or for study, but for fun. It also provides a glimpse of her literacy practices and the context in which she pursues them. As Brandt states, "[L]iteracy abilities are nest in and sustained by larger social and cultural activity" (2001, p. 3). As a highly-educated individual, Anne's literacy work is not focused as much on the acquisition of literacy, though it is probable that she obtains linguistic and literate benefits from engaging in literacy practices in her free time, especially those practices that engage her non-native language(s). Instead, her leisure-time literacy work is a means to another end, to participation in activities that provide her a sense of agency (as a reader of a highly specific non-fiction genre, for example) but are nevertheless sanctioned within her particular sociocultural milieu. Such an identity stands in contrast to Maricruz's self-characterization thus far as one who acts as a learner primarily in school, pursuing coursework in English and only "sometimes" practicing English with her brothers. Brandt cautions that a literate identity that does not look outside of the often archaic and static routines of literacy work within school may not position a student for success in the wider world, where literacies are ever-changing and highly competitive commodities (Brandt, 2001; Gebhard, 2004; Gee, 1990, 2004a; McNeil, 2000).

Anne's closing does several interesting things. She elides the "I" in writing, "Look forward to your next email" (250) Given that she has indented the sentence as the start of a new (closing) paragraph and that she capitalized the "L," the elision fits within

the cultural model of a relatively brief, informal email. She has made a transition from the initial discourse of the pen pal; though she stated that the decision to reduce her language to quick comments and questions was deliberate, what she is now producing is also shaped by the discursive norms of email. Anne carries the lightheartedness and move towards intimacy of the second half of this brief email by inserting "Your friend" into the closing; in prior emails she has concluded simply with her name.

Though Anne continues to fuel the conversation with questions, Maricruz provides the meat of the topics in her responses, whether that is through narrative illustration or through her analysis of the topics Anne has presented.

253 Date Nov 13, 2006 3:33 PM
254 subject Re: hello

255 Dear Anne,

256 Hi. How are you?

257 You are right
258 it is not easy
259 to learn
260 a language
261 but I practice
262 for learn more
263 about of this language.
264 My hobby is
265 listening to Spanish pop music
266 because I like the music
267 and sometimes I draw
268 in the afternoon.
269 I enjoy much
270 of my hobby's enjoy too
271 in the school
272 because the class are very amused and interesting.
273 Now in Halloween
274 I spent it very well
275 with my family
276 and in the school too
277 with my friends
278 but,too I remember
279 when it was
280 in Mexico
281 because I enjoyed
282 with my friends
283 and we asked
284 for candies
285 in the doors
286 of the houses.
287 After I went dancing
288 dressed
289 in my costume
290 and each year
291 we celebrated
292 in the same manner.

293 How did you spend your Halloween?

294 Sincerely,
295 Maricruz

In this email, Maricruz relaxes her opening "Hello" to a "Hi" and for the first time, indicates that the "How are you" is asking a question of her respondent. She opens the body of the letter with a solidarity-building, "Yes, you are right" but does not stop there. Rather than agree with the difficulty of learning English in particular, she generalizes the difficulty to learning "a language" (260). (In the mid-point interview the previous week, she had expressed her desire to take French when she returns to her home school) (Interview, November 8, 2006). In a conjunctive clause starting with a defiant "but," she emphasizes her dedication to the project in stating "I practice for learn more about of this language" (261-263). I read the double preposition "about of" (263) as indecision about which preposition to use following the phrase "learn more;" what I find interesting about this is that she did not make English the simple direct object of "learn more." As a reader, I obtain the message that she views her work not as the practical use of the language, but as the study of the language. The language in this paragraph indicates that Maricruz continues to view the study of English as a school-based activity, not a social activity on a broader scale.

In the next sentence, in response to Anne's question, "Do you have any hobby's [sic]?" (243), as a native Spanish speaker and beginning English speaker, Maricruz might have been expected to respond, "I have the hobby..." Instead, she promotes "hobby" from the object to the subject while keeping the gerund form that Anne had employed ("My hobby is listening to Spanish pop music..") (264-265). She takes a preliminary step toward justification and elaboration with "because I like the music" (266), then identifies a second hobby "and sometimes I draw in the afternoon" (267-268). Here, in a show of

increasing verbal dexterity, she does not replicate the gerund form and parallel "drawing" with "listening." Both the temporal adverb "sometimes" and the temporal prepositional phrase "in the afternoon" indicate that drawing is not a continuous activity. Therefore, the simple present tense is a more apt choice.

In another appropriation of Anne's language, Maricruz completes the triad of the list of "hobby's" in a new sentence, one that returns to a familiar theme. Utilizing Anne's word "enjoy" she reiterates her enjoyment of being in school, not solely because she is learning English but also because she finds her classes "very amused and interesting" (272). Whereas this statement rounds out her image as a school-oriented person—school is not just for learning, it can be seen as a fun hobby, too – it does not serve to develop her image as a participant in a wider society, certainly not in the way that the image of a museum-goer evokes the notion of engagement in the public sphere and privileged cultures. Compared to Erica's appropriation of María's delight in museum-going cited in the previous chapter (even though she herself had not partaken of museum culture), Maricruz's appropriation of "enjoyment" and her application of the concept to a school-based setting is not likely to gain her traction in building rapport with Anne.

In line 23, Maricruz marks a change of topic with "Now", then proceeds with her first move into unsolicited information (273). She provides not simply declarative information; she sets up a comparison between her Halloween in this country versus what she had experienced in Mexico.

> Now in Halloween
> I spent it very well
> with my family
> and in the school too

with my friends
but,too I remember
when it was
in Mexico
because I enjoyed
with my friends
and we asked
for candies
in the doors
of the houses.
After I went dancing
dressed
in my costume
and each year
we celebrated
in the same manner. (273-292)

Some context for her writing is in order here. The school had concluded classes early on Halloween day in order for students to experience American-style trick-or-treating. They funneled through the halls, visiting teachers at their doorways and employing the rehearsed phrase, "Trick or treat!" (still visible on some whiteboards) in exchange for candy. The handful of students who wore costumes were surrounded by hordes of friends as they made the rounds to the classrooms. It did not take long for the students to visit all the classrooms on both floors; the rest of the time they passed chatting and roaming in the hallways or in small groups inside classrooms. In all likelihood, some students took advantage of the altered schedule to leave the school early that day.

Maricruz states that she spent the day "very well" (274) both at home and at school "with my friends" (277). Then, in line 24, she marks a transition and entrance into narrative territory: "but, too I remember" (278). Maricruz does not say that *she* was in Mexico; "it" (279), Halloween, perhaps for her "the real Halloween," was there in Mexico, and she had been there to take part in it. Rather than being confined to the hallways of school, she and her friends had gone door to door in her hometown and had

concluded the day with a dance outside of the home. This too was not a regular come-as-you-are dance, as she periodically participates in at school, during the school day – on Halloween in Mexico, she remained in her costume. The nostalgia for this past life is punctuated with the fairy tale-like coda "and each year we celebrated in the same manner" (290-292). Indeed, the school's version of an American-style Halloween seems like the facsimile, not the once-exported but now entirely *Mexicano* version that Maricruz carries in her memories from years past.

Before closing, as a more full-fledged partner in a conversation, not simply a respondent, Maricruz asks Anne, "How did you spend your Halloween?" (293). She concludes with the standard classroom-provided closing (294-295).

EXCHANGE #4: "TAKING BACK THE REINS"

In terms of language production, Anne responded positively to Maricruz's message, providing nearly double the content of her previous message:

296 Date Nov 15, 2006 6:00 PM
297 subject RE: hello

298 Hi Maricruz,

299 I spent a nice Halloween with my godson and his family;
300 we too went house to house.
301 He dressed as count Dracula.
302 What was your costume?

303 I see you too like music.
304 Who is your favorite Spanish pop artist?
305 One of my favorites is Jesús Gabriel and Luis Miguel.
306 However, I like music in general… classical, salsa, merengue, jazz, rock and roll.
307 Since you like music do you like to dance?

308 I love to cook,
309 do you?
310 I remember cooking with my mother and grandmother as a child
311 and loved the different smells in the kitchen.
312 I even remember writing my grandmother's recipes down, since she never wrote them down

313 and I wanted to make sure that when I was older I would be able to cook her recipes.
314 She loved to bake cookies, cakes and brownies.
315 Have a good week!
316 Look forward to your next email,
317 Anne

In formatting her email, she chose to insert three lines breaks between most sections of the email. This is a new practice, one she continues in her final email message. This may reflect a change in the email program she is using or she may be deliberately highlighting the sense breaks that paragraphs provide in written discourse. Whether pedagogically intentional or not, Maricruz's last two email messages demonstrate an attention to separating sense units into paragraphs that was not previously apparent.

Anne begins by answering Maricruz's question, providing a simple description of the evening out with her godson and extended family. She does state, in solidarity, that "we too" (300) went house to house, though Maricruz mentioned this in reference to her Halloween in Mexico at least two years prior. Similarly, when she asks about Maricruz's costume, she appears to imply the near past. In other words, it appears that Anne has not picked up on Maricruz's depiction of a Halloween of some years ago in another country.

In the next paragraph, Anne again continues Maricruz's thread of conversation by commenting on Spanish pop music and asking for more detailed information. However, she opens the paragraph in a way that acts as "taking the reins" again in the conversation. In response to Maricruz's interest in music, she writes, "I see you too like music" (303). The inclusion of the adverb "too" functions as a way of making herself the primary actor, the first referent in the question "Who likes music?" thereby placing Maricruz in a secondary role. In asking the next question, Anne immediately complies with her own

request by listing two of her own favorites (written as, "One of my favorites") (305), singers immediately well-known to Mexicans across multiple generations. She then expands her list of preferred musical genres to "classical, salsa, merengue, jazz, rock and roll" (306), reinforcing by this diverse selection prior keys to her sociocultural identity as an educated, urbane, multinational actor. Her identification of these genres as music "in general," as well as prior clues to her socially-situated identity, rule out the likelihood that she listens to rap, reggetón, Norteño, or other musical genres popular among the student body of the NHS. Though I believe that most teens would not hesitate in giving their honest opinions of which musical genres they preferred, I nevertheless see Anne's language working to constrain choice, to delimit the boundaries of acceptable musical genres (Foucault, 1981). Given the direction of the entire paragraph, the last question, "Since you like music, do you like to dance?" (307) contains the inference that Anne likes to dance (to certain styles of music) and is looking for Maricruz to respond in the affirmative.

Comparatively, the opening sentence of the next paragraph is more straightforward in first naming an activity Anne enjoys (cooking), then inquiring of Maricruz whether she shares this interest.

> I love to cook, do you? (308-309)

Anne then launches into narrative style, appropriating the "I remember..." opening that Maricruz had employed in her last email, and describes a scene with a kind of detail she had abandoned after her first email. In Anne's response to Maricruz's Halloween question, she had not recognized that Maricruz was writing nostalgically of her time in

Mexico. Ironically, however, here her language summons the same nostalgic sentiments as she describes baking with her mother and grandmother, including sensory detail and the sense of capturing special moments through writing that would otherwise be lost. This use of literacy, unsolicited by adults and purely for personal, pleasurable reasons, complements her prior identification of reading as a hobby. That the cooking is focused on desserts, not day-to-day basics, adds to both the pleasure of those moments and to the self-identification with leisure-time cooking as opposed to necessary cooking. Finally, Anne's given rationale for writing down the recipes, so that she could recall them in a future time, summons an identity that, even in its youth ("I even remember...") (312), was forward-thinking. Though this is an *a posteriori* rationale, given long after the actual events occurred, it not only serves to construct her current identity as someone who values traditional family activity, the art of cooking, and literacy, it also sheds light on what she values in youth identities and priorities.

Continuing the warmth generated in the last paragraph of her email, Anne concludes with a peppy sendoff ("Have a good week!") (315) and an I-elided "Look forward to your next email" (316).

Having been given both questions to answer and autobiographical material to reflect upon and back, Maricruz produces her longest and most complex message to date:

318 date Dec 1, 2006 3:03 PM
319 subject Re: hello

320 Dear Anne,

321 Hello ! how are you ?

322 My favorite costume is of princess.
323 My favorite Spanish pop artist
324 is Shakira,Reik, Chayanne and Thalia.
325 I like
326 to listen
327 to little music
328 in general.
329 I like
330 to dance different types

331 of music,
332 like classical,cumbia and merengue.

333 I like
334 to cook,
335 but I don't to cook very good
336 because always I help my mom.
337 My mother and me sometimes we cook enchiladas,chilaquiles.
338 One time I cooked
339 with my mother
340 a cake
341 and I like
342 to cook cakes.
343 I like too
344 how it smells
345 in the kitchen
346 because it smells
347 of different types
348 of food –
349 my favorite smells are chiles, cinnamon, chocolate, and coffee.

350 In Thanksgiving
351 my sister made an dinner
352 and she invited us.
353 I, my parents, my two brothers, and my uncles went
354 to her house.
355 She made barbacoa and spaghetti not turkey
356 but it is alright
357 because I I do not like the turkey.
358 During the others day
359 in vacation
360 I did my homework
361 I went shopping
362 with my mom
363 and I went
364 to the movies.
365 the movie
366 that I saw
367 was "Cars."
368 We thought
369 it was very funny.

370 In this week
371 in school
372 we were taking tests.
373 I think
374 the test
375 of science
376 was the most difficult.
377 The parts
378 of the test
379 that I like
380 are the scientific operations and the essay.

381 I hope
382 you have good weekend.

383 Sincerely,
384 Maricruz

The first paragraph is occupied with answering Anne's questions. Rather than reply that she did not wear a costume for Halloween this year, Maricruz sidesteps further discussion (and possibly employs a face-saving measure for Anne) by treating the costume question as a general question about favorites. I read "of princess" (322) as an attempt to grapple with the indefinite article "a"; in oral conversation, the words "of" and "a" are often indistinguishable, and in most instances, the preposition "of" has a clearer role to play than the indefinite and often unnecessary "a," so it is not surprising that "of" should appear here. In either case, the intent of her meaning is not compromised.

Maricruz echoes much of Anne's language in her answers, with slight changes. Maricruz likes to listen to "little music in general" (327-328), which shows that without a boldface declaration of "I do not like" (used later), she is delimiting her preferences to Spanish pop, in contrast to Anne's more eclectic tastes. She does express her like of dancing, and perhaps in another face-saving/solidarity-building gesture, accommodates Anne's list of musical preferences, substituting "cumbia" for "salsa" in the series (332). Like Anne, in discussing musical choices, Maricruz keeps to a singular subject and verb even when presenting plural predicate nominatives. Anne began this trend by stating, "One of my favorites is Jesús Gabriel and Luis Miguel" (305). Maricruz responds, "My favorite Spanish pop artist is Shakira, Reik, Chayanne, and Thalia" (323-324). Later in the email, when elaborating on an affirmation of Anne's statement about loving "the different smells in the kitchen" (311), Maricruz switches to a plural subject to correspond with plural predicate nominatives: "my favorite smells are chiles, cinnamon, chocolate, and coffee" (349). This may be an instance where Maricruz had worked out a grammatical construction through multiple uses, or where her venture into unsolicited information afforded her the mental space to adopt a different, more accurate grammatical structure.

In the next paragraph, she puts her own twist on the trope of "cooking with mothers" that Anne initiated. She clearly casts herself in the role of helper (rather than archivist), and implies by the word "always" that assisting in the kitchen is a regular activity. She allows that "one time" she cooked a cake with her mother and in solidarity with Anne, she decided she likes the idea. Also in solidarity, she expresses pleasure with

the smells of the kitchen, but goes further to cite four earthy, complex, powerhouse ingredients of Mexican cuisine.

Once again, Maricruz moves beyond the "assigned" topics, this time to discuss events over the Thanksgiving holiday and then back at school. The broadening of the conversation from question-and-answer to unsolicited personal information, her elevated role as a co-participant in the conservation, and her improved expressive abilities all give her agency to adopt a breezier, more confident tone. She brings up her extended family in the U.S., which she has not mentioned previously. Having depicted her sister's departure from the traditional Thanksgiving meal, she then offers her judgment on the decision; later, she weighs in on the movie "Cars." For the first time, she has departed from a strong school-based identity to mention experiences that took place outside of school and the home.

She returns to her school-based identity in the next paragraph. Whereas many students would not have any favorable comments about a week of testing, Maricruz bolsters her image as a dedicated student by identifying a test as difficult, yet still pointing out the parts of the test that she prefers. This passage affords her an opportunity to appropriate for her own identity-building the oft-heard technical language of school ("scientific operations," "essay"). The "I like" pattern may have been a holdover in her memory from the opening of the letter, or a stylistic choice to tie this section to the remainder of the email.

EXCHANGE #5: EBULLIENCE

Anne's final email opens exuberantly, with words that elicited a broad smile from Maricruz:

318 Date Dec 11, 2006 12:49 PM
319 subject RE: hello

320 Hi Maricruz,

321 What a wonderful email you sent me,
with so much information about you
and your life,
322 thank you!

323 Your command of the English language
and your writing skills have improved
so much since you sent me your first
email.
324 I am so proud of you!

325 Do you have any special plans for the
Christmas holidays?

326 Will you have family visiting you?
327 Do you cook anything special with your
Mom?
328 One of my favorites foods are
chilaquiles de pollo and the Mexican
hot chocolate with churros –
329 I can almost taste and smell them!

330 We will spend the holidays in Austin
with friends.
331 Perhaps go to a movie, and some walks.
332 I look forward to meeting you in
January.

333 Stay safe and healthy.
334 Have a wonderful Christmas and fun
New Year with your family
335 and friends.
336 See you 2007!

337 Anne

Anne opens on an exclamatory note – in fact, three of the four paragraphs in the email conclude with exclamation points, indicating higher-than-normal excitement from an outwardly reserved person. The prominence of the words "you" and "your" within the email, nine times in the first three sentences alone, point to Maricruz as the source of this excitement.

In the second sentence, Anne adopts the stance of evaluator of Maricruz's written English, her word choice reflecting not only formal evaluative archetypes ("command of the English language," "writing skills") but possibly too the return of stylized language ("command of the English language" instead of "English," "writing skills" instead of

"writing") not seen since her first message to Maricruz. The perceived improvement in Maricruz's English may be permitting Anne a return to a favored style she had abandoned after the disappointment of Maricruz's first response. Of course, it must be noted that the role of evaluator is itself a position of power, so here, praise comes delivered from a superior stance.

The second paragraph provides three questions and some commentary pertaining to the upcoming Christmas holidays (which Anne assumes that Maricruz partakes in). I note here that the three questions refer both forward to the holiday but also to background information that Maricruz had provided in her last email. In other words, Anne has developed a foundation of information from which to ask questions that have a high probability of relevance for Maricruz's life. Moreover, what Anne chooses to discuss and ask about have already been confirmed as shared experiences. For example, the three foods that Anne indicates as her favorites ("chilaquiles de pollo, and the Mexican hot chocolate with churros") (328) contain as their chief spices chiles, cinnamon, and chocolate – three of the Maricruz's four preferred "kitchen smells." Throughout this email, Anne demonstrates that she has found elements of a shared sociocultural identity with Maricruz; from this comfort zone she can adopt a more fluid, sincere style of communication, much like Maricruz's tone in the previous email.

Unfortunately, Maricruz's final email was composed under limited time constraints; the final half of the class period was needed to review the format for the final exam. Thus, it most likely does not indicate all the ideas that Maricruz had wished to commit to the messsage. Additionally, it shows some lack of addressing of conventions

such as capitalization and punctuation that she previously had addressed through editing. Despite the time constraint, she continues to demonstrate elaboration of ideas and initiation of topics that were not addressed or prompted by Anne:

318 Date Dec 14, 2006 3:18 PM
319 subject Re: hello

320 Dear Anne

321 hello! how are you?

322 thank you
323 for yours words!
324 Now I not have any special plan
325 for Christmas holidays,
326 but my uncle invited us
327 to an dinner.
328 I think
329 go
330 with my family
331 to his home
332 of my uncle.
333 my uncle, say
334 that they to do pinatas and a festival lights(una arrullada).

335 I think
336 in New Year
337 my mother and me to cook pozole or other thing
338 I don't know what food.
339 In New Year
340 my mother to do an dinner
341 with my sister.

342 In January 8, 07
343 is my birthday
344 and of my brother
345 is the birthday
346 of the two.
347 May be my mother to doing an dinner
348 for to be
349 with my family.

350 Marry Christmas and
351 you have wonderful New Year.

352 Sincerely,
353Maricruz

As I had written earlier, Maricruz was thrilled to receive Anne's words of praise. Her normally placid countenance was fixed with a broad smile as she began her composition. This excitement is reflected in the opening handful of sentences; unfortunately, I believe the lack of capitalization visually dampens the jubilation. Moreover, the quick transition to "Now I not have any special plan..." (324) without a paragraph break does not adequately set apart the simply expressed yet sincere gratitude.

This email, consumed primarily with talk about the upcoming holidays, places Maricruz firmly in the nest of her family, celebrating holidays in traditional Mexican ways, with piñatas, una arrullada (literally, a "cooing," which I take to mean singing carols, perhaps in front of a Nativity scene)[12], pozole, and several family-centered meals. The composition as a whole is future-oriented, one paragraph looking forward to the Christmas, another to the New Year holidays, and a third devoted to her and her brother's January birthdays. As a way of filling out the details of each event, each paragraph contains suppositions about future events. The email provides evidence that Maricruz is on the brink of incorporating the future tense in her writing; subsituting "will" for "to" in most instances will yield the standard expression of the future tense.

Maricruz's role as a child in these holiday events is emphasized in her discussion of the New Year's meal. Returning to these words, at first she states that she and her mother will make pozole (337). Immediately, however, she hedges in stating "or other

[12] Maricruz had asked me for an English translation of this word; I understood her to say "una velada," which I translated for her as a festival of lights, a generic description I have used in years past to describe religious/winter celebrations involving candlelight across religions and denominations. This is actually a good example of my providing her neutral "school-safe" language to describe a religious ceremony. I did ask her to provide the actual Spanish word in parentheses so that Anne could make her own connections; that is the only way that I was later able to discern the word she actually used and investigate its meaning.

thing" (337), then in a new sentence, "I don't know what food" (338). Finally, she moves back to certainty by stating, "my mother to do an dinner with my sister" (340). In other words, her older, married, out-of-the-house sister and her mother are the true preparers of this family meal, and Maricruz's suppositions are just that, given that those are not the decisions for her, still a child and not yet a full participant in family decisions, to make.

Maricruz demonstrates her experimentation with the conventions of reported speech in line 333, when she writes, "my uncle, say that..." Recalling her writing of "but-then comma" in prior messages (136), in this email, she demonstrates a more conventional incorporation of "but" and the comma in the sense break in line 326. Maricruz also demonstrates awareness that the sentence "In January 8, 07 is my birthday and of my brother" (342) does not adequately express the uniqueness and delight in this coincidence. (They are not twins). She goes on to add "is the birthday of the two" (345-346).

In her closing, Maricruz utilizes both the short form of a holiday wish "Marry Christmas" (350) and takes a stab at an extended statement "you have wonderful New Year" (351). She likely obtained the "wonderful" from Anne's desire for her to have a "wonderful Christmas" (334) and moved it to the New Year, given that Christmas already had the modifier "Marry." Given the time crunch in pushing out a final message in half a class period, the extra courtesy and warmth she projects in this final statement is neither arbitrary nor trivial. The image the language evokes is less that of a child writing to an elder and more of a conversation among peers; in other words, whereas much of

Maricruz's social identity as expressed in her email messages seems rooted in childhood, here her words contain an element of grace that is not child-like but more befitting a polite young adult. These words are all the more poignant as the leaving-off point before their face-to-face meeting in January.

CONCLUSION

Over the course of the email exchanges, Anne presented a variety of socially-situated identities, beginning with a rhetorically highbrow description of herself as a well-educated, multinational, moral actor dedicated to a project of life-long learning and growth. When this self-description was met with a relatively sparse response from Maricruz, she scaled back on both the amount of language she provided and the narration of her life, resorting instead to questions interspersed with brief commentary. As Maricruz's composition skills grew, and she herself began to present a more complete social identity – of a student dedicated to the learning of English, spending much of her free time with her family, nostalgic for her life in Mexico – Anne began to find common ground in some of the cultural models Maricruz had provided, particularly the image of the girl apprentice in her mother's/grandmother's kitchen, and began to reflect back some of these cultural models in her own terms. Along with this move toward shared cultural identity (and increasing narrative content) came several subtle moves to reinforce her superior position in the conversation, first by "retrofitting" the discussion of music, initiated by Maricruz, to make it seem as if she were the initiator of the topic, and then by assuming formal evaluative language as she appraised Maricruz's progress in English.

Maricruz's socially-situated identity emerged more slowly, but from early on, she reinforced her dedication to the project of schooling, particularly the acquisition of English through attendance of school. Her burgeoning composition skills gave her the ability to express more concretely her preferences in life (Halloween in Mexico *versus* Halloween in the U.S., Spanish pop music and not other genres, barbacoa and spaghetti over turkey), but they also gave clues as to her role in the family as a child, not yet an independent young woman, perhaps more constrained in her ability to move about in society than when she lived in Mexico under the care of her grandparents. Despite the puerile role she assumes within her family, she does at times demonstrate a level of sophistication in English more befitting her young adult age. For example, she skirts around the issue of being an undocumented student and gives several societally acceptable reasons why she cannot see her grandparents (leaving off why they cannot visit her here). And in her last email, she demonstrates a rhetorical flourish of her own in wishing Anne happy holidays.

From a standpoint of composition ability, Maricruz demonstrates progress in her ability to elaborate responses to Anne, providing more evaluative statements, descriptive and emphatic details, mixed verb tenses, unsolicited threads of conversation, and narrative tropes. She experiments with future verb constructions and article usage, and stylistically refines both her opening and closing statements. Over the course of five emails exchanges in three months' time, she has made notable progress in her composition abilities. The word count of her compositions climbs upward over the first three exchanges and peaks sharply at exchange #4: the time in class for the fifth exchange

was approximately half the normal allocation, rendering a word count comparison unproductive.

From the basis of the email exchanges, it would appear that a sort of shared identity had been co-constructed between the partners, a starting point of positive energy for the face-to-face meeting in January. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. During the classroom meeting time and in the debriefing session held immediately afterwards, Anne projected a tangible rejection of Maricruz that caught the attention of observers and fellow mentors alike. At several points in their discussion, prolonged silence or Anne's raised voice brought intervention, both from me and from another pair, who sought to include Maricruz and Anne in their discussion. Anne's discomfort was confirmed in the follow-up interview. The rejection was rooted in Anne's perception that Maricruz was "lacking of incentive, motivation" (Interview, February 21, 2007); according to Anne, this lack of motivation was apparent not just in Maricruz's lack of elaborated responses to questions in their face-to-face conversation ("it was kind of like question, answer, stop") but also in her physical appearance:

> I've seen... in people with the most modest means, poor, rural take so much more pride in their, in themselves, the way they come across, and wanting to look good and feel good and she, she didn't do any of that. I mean, she didn't come across as having bathed... (Interview, February 21, 2007)

Anne was disheartened that Maricruz had identified *leyes* (law) as a course of study she would like to continue beyond high school, yet she was not able to identify a clear pathway to becoming a lawyer. By her own admission, Anne became frustrated with Maricruz's lack of concrete knowledge about being or becoming a lawyer, and began to

address her with more strident, directive language that caught the attention of others. Later, she recalled

> I guess when I tried talking to her... I would say to her what do you want to do, she did say I want to be a lawyer, I said, well to be that, you need to read more, you need to know what else is going on, who's the president, she couldn't answer anything.
>
> I found her to be very lacking of incentive, motivation, yet it just seems so odd that here was this person with no outwardly motivation in body language or conversation wanted to be a lawyer instead of like... Those two things didn't come together. (Interview, February 21, 2007)

In the follow-up interview, she broadened her criticism to include other students in the room.

> It seems that none of the other students, even though they were animated and motivated talking to their mentors, never said anything [about] getting that far in life, so that to me was quite a contrast that meant that they really did not want to go further than high school or enough to bring in money day to day, mouth to mouth type of living... [T]hey're certainly not the first immigrants to this country, and they have so much in front of them at their disposition that you and I never had, so it was kind of sad to see that they weren't taking advantage... (Interview, February 21, 2007)

These post hoc comments by Anne bring back to the forefront and in much more vivid language some elements of the social identity she espoused in her first email, that of the continuous learner, the moral actor, and the elite multinational. From her vantage point, it is both incomprehensible and reprehensible that a young person, having identified a goal in life, would not grasp for and take advantage of the knowledge available in order to take progressive steps toward that goal. She may be correct in believing that in order to gain success in a knowledge-based economy, workers must make active use of knowledge tools such as media, technology, and informed individuals (Brandt, 2001; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2003; Gebhard, 2005; Gee *et al.*, 1996; Reich, 1992). By placing blame on the students and their families for not taking these steps, however, she and the many who would agree with her embrace an ideological

stance that discounts that much larger societal forces perpetuate the sociocultural and economic gulfs between the students and their own privileged positions (Apple, 1990, 1996, 2001; Bettie, 2003; Brandt, 2001; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Delpit, 1995; Fairclough, 1995; Freire, 1993; Gebhard, 2004; Gee, 1990, 1999; Gee *et al*., 1996; Lakoff, 2004; McIntosh, 1988; Oakes, 2005; Soto, 1997; Steele, 1999; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). Anne, though a fairly recent immigrant in her own right, is participating in an age-old conversation in the United States that glorifies a bygone past of hard-working, steadily-rising immigrants while it depreciates the current generation of new arrivals (Blauner, 1987; Olneck, 2004; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001). In fact, her upbringing in a strongly hierarchical Mexican society may be contributing to the American dialogue on immigration an even stauncher resistance to the stereotypical faith that a few "rugged individuals" will climb upward in society. In a statement that conclusively confirmed for me Anne's ideologically rigid stance as an elite and her decided subordination of Maricruz, she compared her conversation with Maricruz to "pulling teeth... out of a very tame animal" (Interview, February 21, 2007).

In her post hoc interview, Maricruz enthusiastically agreed with Anne's suggestions that going to the public library, reading newspapers, and conversing in the public sphere in English were all excellent ideas; in fact, she had communicated these suggestions to her mother and older brother the very day of their conversation, and they had concurred that this was sound advice (Interview, January 31, 2007). However, as of the date of this writing, Maricruz has not pursued any of these actions, not because of a lack of will or motivation, but because I believe within her and her family's ideological

framework, *she is doing her part as a learner by going to school*. In fact, her voyage to this country was strongly motivated by the desire to continue her schooling life whereas completing high school would have been financially impossible in Mexico. Compared to the school she attended in Mexico, she is now learning "much more," and her grades are markedly better (Interview, January 31, 2007). She is grateful for the opportunity, and while in school, she strives to overcome her timidity and perform to her best ability (Interview, January 31, 2007). While many, if not most, of her fellow students have taken jobs in their second year in the United States; her family has consciously decided to keep her out of the workforce and see her through college (Interview, January 31, 2007).

Researchers have written of the pro-school ethos of immigrant students and their strong faith in the formal education system. This is often seen as naïveté by jaded age-group American-born peers (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). Gee (1999) has compared the discursive orientation of upper middle class and working class U.S.-born Midwestern youth and has found a marked difference between the forward-looking, action-oriented strivings of the wealthier group as compared to the more day-to-day socially-centered views of the working class youth. In the pairing of Anne and Maricruz, I witnessed an almost visceral clash of ideologies as I brought two members of disparate sectors of society together.

Unlike the face-to-face communication, which provoked such a strong reaction from Anne, the email messages, though indicative of ideological stances, did not demonstrate the same strength of commitment. Importantly for the premise of this study that business professionals are more interested in the content of messages than their

grammatical constructions, Anne quickly refuted the idea that Maricruz's written language had or could have bothered her in any way, stating that, "it's just a person that [is] struggling to take command of a language" (Interview, November 13, 2006). Moreover, whereas the content of Maricruz's messages initially caused Anne to feel "taken aback" for its "lack of depth," she later indicated genuine pleasure, both in the email to Maricruz and in the post hoc interview with me, at the progress Maricruz had made in her written abilities (Interview, November 13, 2006).

I attribute the softening of Anne's stance vis-à-vis Maricruz to the medium of email itself. I believe that it has both a physical and a temporal distancing aspect that in this case, opened spaces for more equitable communications and identity constructions (Grosvenor, 1998; Lam, 2000; Sotillo, 2000). First, it allowed Maricruz, a shy student, to operate without the fear of direct face-threat (Lam, 2000). In their face-to-face conversations, Maricruz did not venture conversation in English and gave minimal responses in Spanish, much as she had given basic responses at the outset of the email correspondence. This aggravated her partner, perhaps because of the face-threat it presented for her as a participant in a publicly unsuccessful conversation. The conversation became more of a one-sided series of directives, further closing down both Maricruz's speech as well as her speaking opportunities. In contrast, as Maricruz built competence in composing responses in email, she elaborated responses, initiated topics, and provided assertions of her beliefs and preferences.

Second, the lack of face-threat opened Anne up to following Maricruz's topic threads, both consciously, as when she discussed Halloween activities and her musical

preferences, and unconsciously, as when she listed her favorite holiday foods, which echoed Maricruz's identification of her favorite kitchen smells.

In a related sense, email through its anonymity allows identity play not easily available in face-to-face communication (Lam, 2000). In that regard, though I believe that Maricruz was being truthful in all of her statements to Anne (even to the point of being cleverly truthful in her reasons for not going back to Mexico for a visit), perhaps her repeated assertions of being a student dedicated to the learning of English went beyond "mere" statements to allowing her to try on a new, more aggressive identity as a language learner. In the mid-point interview, when I asked her what she was considering studying at her next high school and beyond, she declared that she wanted to continue studying languages, adding French to her Spanish and English (Interview, November 8, 2006).

In other words, the hybrid space of email allowed Maricruz to conduct identity work that her personality may have hindered in face-to-face communications. In a reciprocal relationship typical of discourse interactions, I would add that the email exchanges worked, unbeknownst to her, to expand her identity as a language learner (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 1999; Johnstone, 2002; Wodak, 2004). Through this email arrangement, Maricruz became a language apprentice (Gee, 1990; Gee *et al.*, 1996), appropriating the language of an mature and successful practitioner of English and turning the other's words to her own uses (Bakhtin, 1981; Prior, 2001). Maricruz acknowledged in her interviews that the writing she did for this project was distinctly different from the reading and writing that she routinely performs in her other classes.

This sentiment was shared by many students but similar to the others, Maricruz was at a loss to point the difference into words. I believe this difference is rooted in the different identity the project required her to assume at the outset—to move from a *student* of English to an active *user* of English. This was Maricruz's (and many others') first foray into communicating in English with a purpose other than the completion of a class assignment (Interview, January 31, 2007). Not all students embraced the desired goal of sharing their personal stories, ambitions, and interests, but as I hope to have shown in this chapter, Maricruz took seriously this opportunity to paint a verbal self-portrait and to engage an adult in email-based correspondence. Though she did show improvement in her expressive written abilities, by no means did she approach a level of fluency that will guarantee success in her next academic setting; in fact, I harbor concern about her response to life in a large, comprehensive high school where her limited English skills will not curry much favor.

Having witnessed Maricruz's rapid development in her English expressive abilities, and having observed her fortification of a sociocultural identity, I think forward to Maricruz's next steps in her formal education and indoctrination into American society. I find myself with several hopes that unfortunately run against the historical odds of their achievement. I hope that this exposure to powerful discourses of power and privilege and her own stubborn responses, will gird her for future battles. I hope too that Maricruz filters out Anne's pessimism and absorbs some of her ideas of a multilingual, multinational life-long learner, one who willingly and voluntarily seeks information from a multitude of sources inside formal institutions and out. I hope that she continues to

demonstrate fortitude and persistence to see through her studies and fulfill her family's goals. Finally, I hope that this project has given her confidence and desire to venture outside of the schoolhouse doors and become a member of the region's bilingual community. Whether she see it or not, I believe she has already demonstrated the seeds of such an identity within her.

Chapter Seven – Summary & Implications

> The better our command of genres, the more freely we can employ them, the more fully and clearly we reveal our individuality in them (where this is possible and necessary), the more flexibly and precisely we reflect the unrepeatable situation of communication – in a word, the more perfectly we implement our free speech plan
>
> (M. M. Bakhtin, 1986. p.80)

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the final of the dissertation, I accomplish several summarizing tasks. First, I review in brief the research base and critical rationale that served as the study's foundation. Then, I recap the findings presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. These findings correspond to the three research questions that anchored the critical discourse analysis:

- What socially-situated identities and underlying ideologies are presented by the adults to the students in the course of the email exchanges?
- How do students receive and respond to these identities and ideological orientations?
- How does student language change over the course of the email exchanges?

I position these findings within the fields of critical discourse analysis and also as a contribution to the burgeoning field of study of newcomer ELLs in U.S. secondary public schools.

Looking forward, I suggest how the data set gathered within this study could undergo different forms of analytic treatment and how future studies could be framed

based upon this singular experience. Similarly, I entertain possibilities of how the findings of this study could shape both instructional practices and policy decisions within secondary public schools that serve late arrival ELLs.

I conclude this study by returning to an idea presented in the opening chapter, where I first posited that the treatment of late arrival ELLs in our public schools connects in important ways to our national ethos as a "nation of immigrants." How we choose to frame this appellation has both immediate and future ramifications in a globalized world order.

BASIS AND RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

The impetus for this research project arose from a confluence of data sources that pertain to the lives of late arrival secondary English Language Learners in Texas public schools. Demographic projections of current and future school-aged populations depict a society that is undergoing rapid and dramatic change, highlighting the need to examine current instructional practices and societal perspectives, and to seek more effective ways to serve increasing numbers of secondary ELLs before they leave formal schooling programs (Capps *et al*., 2005; Fry, 2005a, 2005b; Murdock, 2005). Ethnographies of the schooling lives of immigrant secondary students attest to their isolation from academically challenging culturally relevant curricula, and to the destructive processes of Americanization that they endure as they are framed as marginal members of the wider society (Bettie, 2003; Olsen, 1997; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Critical discourse analyses that interrogate the ideological underpinnings of school-based practices for ELLs indicate that, even when reform efforts attempt to address a globalized world order,

practices and discourses fall back to familiar patterns that ascribe second language learners marginalized, "other" positions far from the academic tracks that will elevate and promote their success (Gebhard, 2004, 2005). All of the above is taking place within a "conservative modernization" movement in our public schools, in which high-stakes testing further narrows curriculum conversations, simultaneously constraining efforts to innovate practices while framing students' lack of fluency in academic English as personal deficits that require remediation and even more restricted curricular options (Apple, 2001; Black & Valenzuela, 2004; McNeil, 2000; McNeil & Valenzuela, 2001; Valenzuela, 2002, 2004)

Given the sociocultural moment depicted above, I determined that my attempt to construct an educational experience for late arrival secondary students that had emancipatory potential would have to be situated so as to take advantage of "hybrid spaces," terrain that allowed for contestation of ideological norms and admitted possibilities for new ways of knowing, presenting, and receiving socially-situated identities (Bettie, 2003; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Gee, 1990; Gutierrez *et al.*, 1995; Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2000; K. D. Hall, 2002). I placed the study at the Newcomer High School, a newly created two-year program in a central Texas district that, like other such programs nationwide, has arisen out of the relatively recent phenomenon of larger numbers of late arrival immigrant students. Given the newness of these programs, the research data on them is slim; moreover, their departure from typical ESL configurations in comprehensive secondary schools opens possibilities for experimentation and represents a potential break from stasis (Boyson & Short, 2004).

Once the school and classroom location of the research project was secure, I then set out to sidestep the normalized and normalizing discourses of secondary ELL instruction, which I viewed as largely detrimental to students academic advancements, linguistic growth, and sociocultural well-being. In typical practices, the language of the classroom is largely controlled by the teacher and shaped around reductive exercises generated from workbooks, textbooks, and examinations. The language of grammar often takes on a life of its own and becomes a separate discourse, one that distances students from the reception and practice of fluid, relevant language. Standards of grammatical correctness become the foundation for error correction and a deficit view of the students' own expressive capacities. Opportunities for authentic language practice are reduced due to the students' isolation in ESL programs and in this case, an entirely separate school.

Instead, I sought a vehicle for non-school(ed) language work. As the medium for communication, I selected electronic mail. Email in of itself is considered a hybrid language medium, displaying some conventions familiar to both oral and written communications. I felt that these traits of email-based communications matched well with the second-year students' emerging social and academic fluencies. Moreover, through emoticons, abbreviations, embedded images, and flexibility in spelling, capitalization, and sentence construction, email allows for a flexibility not normally tolerated in traditional paper-and-pencil work (Grosvenor, 1998; Thurlow *et al.*, 2004). An added benefit of using email was that of the five participants chronicled in this study, only one had extensive experience in its use. Providing them access to email and an

account upon the study's completion was a worthwhile introduction to a new form of literacy and communication.

Heeding Gee's call for "language apprenticeships" with discourses of power as a vehicle for language acquisition for marginalized students, I connected students with business professionals in the local community (1990). This decision was bolstered by research that had demonstrated a higher degree of tolerance for grammatical irregularity among non-educator professionals, especially among multilingual business professionals, as long as the intent behind communications was clear (Gray & Heuser, 2003; Hairston, 1981). Going further, I stipulated the need for Latino business professionals; with this move, I hoped to avoid deficit perspectives of Latinos and culturally subtractive models for "becoming American" (Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). That many of the adult participants were non-native speakers, readers, and writers of English only added to the likelihood that they would extend latitude to their student partners as co-communicators in the global lingua franca of English (Cliett, 2003). Once these stipulations were met, I launched the email exchanges in October 2006.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Initial results of the study were generally positive. All of the student participants willingly participated in all aspects of the study, and presented favorable impressions of their experiences in both the mid-way and post-project interviews. All stated a perceived improvement in their written expressive abilities. The classroom teacher was impressed enough with the students' engagement and productivity that he created the semester exam as a series of questions that he emailed to student accounts and graded their replies.

Looking beneath these initial impressions yielded more complex outcomes. Of course, in sidestepping one set of discourses, I had invited in another, and contrary to my initial hopes, the adult participants quickly assumed the superordinate role of "mentor." Much of their "mentor talk" ratified discourses that legitimate a stratified society, the role of workers in a capitalist economy, the unquestioned benefits of formal education, and the absolute necessity of pursuing English with seldom a mention of preserving the native tongue. Their maxims for obtaining success in this society often reiterated a blind faith in the sorting functions of meritocracy without taking into account that in many ways, these students, with no appraisal of their personal attributes or potentials, had already been relegated to the lowest tiers. In this regard, "mentor talk" did not offer a different perspective from the normalized "immigrant's journey," which usually requires several generations before a measure of acceptability and economic comfort is achieved (Olneck, 2004; C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001).

At times, "mentor talk" dug beneath the common refrain of hard work to give glimpses of what kinds of work provide benefit. Yessica obtained from Sara ways to access multimedia to further language learning outside of school, and was provided an example of how bilingualism could help her in the working world. Erica found validation in her dedication to her studies. Pablo learned from Mateo the potential for using social situations for acquiring friends, and how to strategize to meet personal goals. It could be said that a message of perseverance, which all adults expressed at some point, could provide reassurance that their struggles to adjust in a new society and with a new language have had precedents.

Adhering to a "mentor" script and all of its ideological underpinnings had some obviously negative consequences. Diego, who has thrived in a highly competitive, multinational career, failed to establish a meaningful connection in his first message to Jesús around issues of education and career choices; as a result, he quickly leaped to frame Jesús as a service-sector worker. In response to later questions from Jesús about his educational life, he mentioned scant details in passing and in their face-to-face meeting, attempted to glorify the work Jesús currently performs. Similarly, Anne found disappointment in Maricruz's limited responses, and consigned her (and her classmates) to a generation of immigrants who lack ambition and enthusiasm. Mateo, who in his work life acts subversively to help working-class people and immigrants avoid getting gamed by the banking industry, did not share this information with his partner Pablo. Instead, he held fast to general precepts about personal goal-setting. Pablo then utilized Mateo's advice to state a highly impractical strategy for his foremost goal, a return home to Mexico.

In contrast, the greatest benefits of this study are to be found in the language of the students. All of them demonstrated multiple acts of appropriation, turning the language of their adult partners to their own needs in expressing wishes and needs, and in depicting their own socially-situated identities. In a sense, the adults' correspondences became for them personal dictionaries and style manuals. Once they had deciphered the adults' messages, they gained access to linguistic models from which they could pick and choose words and turns of phrase that would aid and enhance their own linguistic performances. The medium of email admirably served this purpose because it provided

easy access to language that could be replicated; at the moment of composition, students could scroll up to re-read messages and even drag desired words down into their responses.

In this project, students were freed from the constraints of language exercises and from the specter of grammatical judgment. The chief, explicit goal I assigned them was to respond to the adults, particularly to their questions, but in responding, students went far beyond perfunctory responses to give voice to their unique identities. Erica used this opportunity to stretch her identity; as she endorsed María's interest in museum culture, in the process she admitted a new possibility into her own cultural repertoire. Jesús put to words his frustrations with an academic life at a point when it seemed that other students were passing him by, even as his teachers continued to offer him a privileged classroom status. Yessica accepted a challenge from her partner, delivered through me, to delve deeper into her thoughts about her future, and produced a nuanced examination of the difficult choices that await her. Embedded within Pablo's escape plan to Mexico was a cry of resistance, of dissatisfaction with living here, separated from his mother and from his "camaradas." And most notably, Maricruz met Anne's silence with a strong reiteration of her identity as a student, and with a burst of information about her personal life in her homeland and here. As a result, she brought Anne back into the conversation.

Returning to Bakhtin's words that opened this chapter, students were able to practice for the first time in a particular genre of discourse in English. This genre was, in a sense, unnatural. Within a stratified and segregated society, it is highly unlikely that adults and students from such disparate strands would connect to conduct personal

conversations. Thanks to the good will of the participants and the conveniences of email, however, it not only became possible, it created new possibilities for students to discover, within a dialogic realm, new expressions of identity. Email, because it allows for a creative construction of personal identity not as easily enacted in face-to-face conversation, facilitated the artifice of these "unnatural" communications (Lam, 2000). All participants adhered strictly to the ground rule that compositions should proceed in English, even when it was known that Spanish was the shared native language (with the sole objection of Pablo, who soon dropped his resistance and composed entirely in English). This compelled the students to search, within themselves, from external sources, and from within the messages of the adults, for expressions that felt true to who they were or what identities they wished to project. In other words, they embraced the necessity of revealing their individualities, and the necessity of doing so in a non-native tongue (Bakhtin, 1986). In exchange for accepting these necessities, they were afforded practice in implementing a personal "free speech plan" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 80).

Critics may argue that valuable class time was lost during this project, that vital moments in a limited timeframe were taken from academic language instruction and given over to social conversation. To this, I offer several rejoinders. First, by casting primarily social conversations in the hyper-realm of the Internet, they do not simply remain social. The text remains frozen, available for repeated examination and ripe for appropriation. Second, unlike the artificial dialogues present within most mass-produced ESL textbooks, these dialogues are actual, meaningful, and intended solely for an audience of two, the co-communicators themselves. Furthermore, the linguistic nature of

email entails that it will include structures that more closely resemble written texts than fabricated social dialogues (Grosvenor, 1998; Sotillo, 2000; Thurlow *et al*., 2004). Third, a rush to immerse secondary students in academic discourse blithely leaps over the many years that native speakers and even elementary-age ELLs have of exposure to social discourses and more basic academic discourses. Newcomer immigrant students who arrive in the U.S. already possessing facility with academic discourses in a first language can often transfer much of their skills to English (C. Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2001). In contrast, newcomer students who have not been exposed to the linguistic realm of academia or who have had their schooling lives significantly interrupted must draw from other funds of knowledge to make this leap. In that regard, this research project was an attempt to provide a bridge, one distinctly different from the typical discourses of school, from the social to the academic.

Finally, it is imperative to return to the words of Gee, who contends that talk of academic and social discourses in the abstract ignore the socially-situated nature of all language production. "Nothing comes from literacy and schooling…Much follows, however, from what comes <u>with</u> literacy and schooling" (Gee, 1990, p. 42; his emphasis). This project gave students an opportunity to practice a new kind of literacy with adults within a sociocultural realm other than what they have received in school. What came with this practice, and how it aids these students as the traverse the pathways and obstacles of American schooling and society, is ultimately yet to be seen. At the very least, however, and in a relatively brief period of time, participation in the project helped each one to diversify his/her "free speech plan" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 40).

CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH

One of the impulses behind this research project was the intent to respond to the collected recommendations of ethnographers of immigrant students' schooling lives by framing an researchable activity that sought to avoid the negative sociocultural discourses and experiences that historically have played out in the hallways and classrooms of American public schools. These pejorative forces include subtractive language experiences, the historically negative thrust of Americanization, the sorting of students into racialized categories, and their exclusion from productive and socioculturally relevant curricula, all of which operate within the occluding discourse of a race-blind, color-blind, gender-blind meritocracy (Bettie, 2003; Olsen, 1997; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). By stepping outside of school(ing) discourses, this project has certainly encountered different forms of pejorative discourses that operate within the Latino business professional community, particularly the continued reification of the ideology of a neutral meritocratic sorting system in American society. At the same time, however, students experienced new forms of flexibility in both language input and output, providing them new forms of expression for the presentation of identity and the contestation of received values. Their communications suggest that school can be a site for reducing as opposed to increasing isolation of late arrival students, and that some of the pejorative forces of traditional schooling practices and discourses can be countered from within the schoolhouse walls.

This project also contributes to the rapidly expanding field of critical discourse analysis. Trustworthiness of the findings ultimately lies in the judgments of the readers,

but I hope to have demonstrated that non-fluent writers of the English language produce language that is sufficiently and convincingly analyzable not only for its syntactical and grammatical features, but for its ideological orientation as it reveals socially-situated identities. Treating adolescent language as a powerful indicator of identity has for some time been considered an important arena of discourse studies but the bulk of these studies have concerned themselves with the language of fluent or near-fluent users of the language (Bettie, 2003; Gee, 1990; Gutierrez *et al*., 1995; E. B. Moje, 2000; Smitherman, 2000). Here, I hope to add to the relatively scant scholarship that accepts the viability of identity work performed by the language of adolescent students labeled by formal processes as "beginning" and "intermediate" speakers, readers, and writers of English (Lam, 2000; McKay & Wong, 1996).

This study also contributes to the nascent field of scholarship surrounding secondary newcomer programs in U.S. public schools (Boyson & Short, 2004). Mostly, I believe that it illuminates a fundamental flaw of such programs; if students are to be further segregated from age-group peers who have higher degrees of fluency in English, and from classes that incorporate academic language intended for more fluent audiences, other avenues for authentic English practice must be sought for them beyond the schoolhouse walls. This study offers one correction to the segregating outcome of newcomer programs, though I hasten to add that in of itself, it is far from sufficient in giving students meaningful exposure to workaday or academic English.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTION

This study has been confined to one trend observed through data analysis, the presence of "mentor talk" and its perceived effects upon student participants. Several other trends observed are ripe for similar kinds of analysis, including depictions of family life and its influences on participant identities, the role of home cultures in shaping identity in this country, the function of transnational identities in a globalized society, and the role of computer-mediated communications in shaping discourse. Moreover, a more quantitative approach could be applied to the data, including the analysis of constructions for syntactic complexity, vocabulary development, verb tenses, preposition use and variety, discursive functions (request, responses, greetings, apologies, etc.), and standard versus non-standard grammatical forms, as well as usage patterns that are unique to computer-mediated communications (Hata, 2003; Murray, 2000; Sotillo, 2000; Thurlow *et al.*, 2004; Toyoda & Harrison, 2002). By analyzing the full corpus of data, including the students whose messages were excluded from this analysis, potential differences could be noted in the output from students who had more intensive guidance in their compositions compared to these five, who had relatively free reign to compose responses.

Factors that were salient in selecting adult participants included their socially-situated identities as university-educated Latino business professionals. In future research projects, other points of salience could be identified and pursued. Students could be matched with university-level, American-educated immigrant students, whose own traversals of academic institutions are more recent in memory and may include experiences shared in common with the student participants. Email proved itself to be a successful buffer in preventing conversations from lapsing into Spanish; this distancing effect could be used in pairing students with fellow secondary-level partners, and may open pathways to communication that are often blocked by hostile or prejudiced attitudes

(Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). Students could also be paired with immigrant adults who have not pursued university-based pathways to the working world; the accounts of these adults may shape students' own views of the possibilities available through academic institutions versus more direct economic pursuits.

Previous research studies have explored encounters between second-language university students and fluent speakers of that language in a virtual reality, where the participants assume new, "avatar" identities (Hata, 2003; Toyoda & Harrison, 2002). With the advent of Second Life and other popular virtual reality experiences, this could be a fruitful terrain for giving students another kind of language immersion experience, one that allows for a complete recreation of personal identity within hybrid terrain (www.secondlife.com). Of course, pursuing such work from within a school-based setting would require careful procedures so as to ensure its ethical consistency with schooling functions.

Extending communications over a longer period of time may confer benefits in addition to increased language exposure and production, and increased opportunities for language and "critical language awareness" instruction. The longer communications continue, the more socially-situated identities can be identified and reflected, and the more work can be done "behind the scenes" to further its emancipatory goals. Relationships can be fostered such that the participants become audiences to other kinds of text production, included school- and work-related projects. Commentary can then extend from the correspondence to the artifacts of their lived experiences.

Rather than my call for open-ended discussions, more focused parameters could be placed on the types of communications that are undertaken. The participants could join in the pursuit of certain forms of information that accrue additional benefits, such as the location of public libraries accessible from home, school, and work, and the

downloading and submission of library card applications. Joint excursions (again, under the aegis of the school) could be identified and planned. Topics mutually agreeable to the pairs could be identified and investigated, with ensuing discussions that relate findings and points of view.

Given the early and steady prominence of "mentor talk" in this study, training of the adults could focus more on the limitations and obstacles that late arrival second-language students encounter upon entry into this society and culture. This may produce more of a problem-solving orientation to strategizing for the achievement of goals. Several of the adults went beyond messages of "hard work" and "practice" of English to detail resources they found or strategies they employed to enhance their English exposure and production. In the orientation and in ongoing commentary, the project facilitator could ask for greater specificity or identify common obstacles the students face in their own pursuits of understanding and practice, then ask the adult participants to help the students think around these obstacles.

Similarly, the identification of adult participants could include screening for candidates who embrace goals of equity and inclusion for immigrant students within mainstream society. Such a screening may pave the way for more frank discussions on the limited educational opportunities available to late-comer students, especially when they have undocumented resident status in this country. By revealing the political influences that weigh on students' daily lived experiences, in addition to helping students think through barriers to their advancement, adults may pursue political engagement beyond the parameters of the study, thereby helping to open other avenues of possibility in the students' lives.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In 2007, the Alliance for Excellent Education produced a report for the Carnegie Corporation acknowledging the rising numbers of adolescent English Language Learners in American public schools and the impossible standards that schools and the students themselves face under strict, high-stakes accountability measures. In framing this problem, the authors call for a recognition that "English language learners must perform *double the work* of native English speakers in the country's middle and high schools" (their emphasis) (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). While calling for accommodations in accountability standards, their recommendations for instructional practices continue to remain firmly in the realm of close monitoring, explicit language instruction, more effective teacher training, and extended-day options. In other words, their suggestions fall squarely into the arena of school-based discourses. Moreover, the students continue to shoulder the burden of "double the work," not the schools, nor the wider society in recognizing the societal constraints we have placed upon the students. This document is two-faced: on the one hand, it calls for a relaxing of federal and state restrictions but on the other, the language continues to frame the students as ultimately responsible for their own success.

Nowhere does the report call for student engagement with larger, English-proficient communities. It does not suggest that meaningful exposure to language practices outside of the classroom can enhance students' in-school language performances, nor does it ask for a reconsideration of the effects of a hyper-segregated society.

This research project and projects like it will hopefully help shift policy conversations that place the site (and indeed, the onus) of rapid language acquisition at the schools to a discussion of the role that a larger society can play in enhancing language

acquisition, and the role that newcomer students will soon be playing in our economies and institutions of higher learning. Moreover, I hope that wider recognition is achieved of the idea that a "full" (read: impossible) fluency ought not to be required of newcomer student because it has never been an absolute prerequisite for many of our most acclaimed scholars, professionals, and innovators. Rather, the focus should turn to discourses that matter outside of educational circles, and within those discourses, considerably more tolerance is given to grammatical inconsistency if other factors – ways of looking, acting, responding, and most importantly, thinking – weigh positively in the minds of the discursive community. I am aware that this represents a massive shift in policy planning and ideological orientation. Nevertheless, I hope that I have offered, through the implementation of a practical, easily executable project, one chink in the armor of the stasis that engulfs secondary ELL instruction.

CONCLUSION

As seen in this research project, the American Dream remains alive and well in the minds of successful immigrant business professionals, and in the aspirations of our newcomer students. Pico Iyer writes that this saga of advancement through American society is continuously reaffirmed and remade by virtue of the immigrants themselves, by their "acting as if it were true" (2000, p. 162). But time may be running out on the American Dream, as our society further demarcates have from have-not, and as the corporate structures that once offered a slow advancement through the ranks depart for the locales that offer the lowest wages and the highest degree of productivity. If the American Dream is to remain alive, it needs some help from outside the immigrant community. America must realize that its role as protector and disseminator of hegemony of English confers it huge advantages in the global market, but at the same time, the proliferation of English also means a relaxation of its rules. Within our borders

exists the massive creative potential of immigrant youth, who given the right fostering, can develop into multilingual, multicultural innovators of a new society. We can choose this path, or risk the economic and social mayhem of a fragmented society. The choice is ours.

Appendix

APPENDIX A: INITIAL WRITING PROMPT FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Greetings, and thank you once again for participating in this project! Here is the email address to which you will send your first message and begin the series of email exchanges:

[email address here]

For your first message, as a means of opening communication and creating possibilities for dialogue, I ask you to respond to this statement:

Tell your story – Who are you and how did you come to be the person you are today? Who or what have been big influences in your life? What are your interests and what are your dreams?

This is a big question, I know. I have left it intentionally wide-open so that your responses come from you, not from a list of categories that I have produced. Your student partner will compose his/her response based in part upon the information you have provided. If you have questions you would like your student partner to answer, please feel free to include them. Please bear in mind that students will be providing only their first names in their responses and they will not provide a home address, telephone number, or a private email account.

APPENDIX B: PROTOCOL FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Interviews will be conducted in Spanish if requested by the respondent**.**

Interview One (mid-way through the project):

1. What are you learning about your partner?
2. What kind of person do you imagine your partner to be?
3. What are you curious about? What do you want to know more about?
4. What do you like or not like about this project so far?
5. What concerns do you have about the project so far?

Specifically for the adult participant:

1. What do you think of your partner's written English abilities?
2. What recommendations do you have for your partner to further his/her English?

Interview Two (at the conclusion of the project):

1. What do you think you have learned about your partner?
2. What kind of person do you imagine your partner to be?
2. Would you like to continue communicating? If so, what continues to hold your interest?
3. What have you liked or not liked about the project?
4. Now that the project is over, what concerns do you have?

Specifically for the adult participant:

1. What do you think of your partner's written English abilities?
2. What changes, if any, have you noticed in your partner's written English abilities?
2. What recommendations do you have for your partner to further his/her English?

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